



## The Adventures of Tyler Socash

Twenty-eight-year-old **Tyler Socash** '09, '15W (MS), is living his dream.

On June 24, Socash left his job as an admissions counselor at the University. The next day, he flew to the Pacific Northwest where he began hiking the 2,633-mile Pacific Crest Trail from Canada to Mexico. When he finishes that trek, he plans to fly to New Zealand to hike the 1,864-mile Te Araroa (also known as the Long Pathway). After that, he will fly back to the United States to hike the 2,185-mile Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine.

His goal is to do what no one else has done before: hike the three trails in one year—a total of nearly 7,000 miles.

Socash's adventure was prompted by a financial decision. "I thought I needed to finally buy a car to get back and forth from an internship while I was finishing up my master's in school counseling at the Warner School," Socash says. He was just about to

buy a \$24,000 bright orange 2015 Subaru Crosstrek when something compelled him to research the trails, which he had previously thought about hiking, and see how much it would cost to hike them all sequentially.

Ironically, the total cost of all three treks was about the same as that new Subaru. Socash put aside his thoughts for his tangerine dream car and opted for a long, wooded adventure on the shoe leather express instead.

Born in Old Forge, New York, a small town nestled just inside the Adirondack Park, which spans an astounding six million acres in New York state, Socash spent a lot of time exploring the woods and waterways of the North Country as a kid. Things have not changed much for him as an adult.

In the last eight years, Socash has climbed the challenging, rock-hopping Adirondack "46" (the 46 highest mountains in New York) five times. He has hiked the length of the 133-mile Northville-Placid Trail, which some call the "Appalachian Trail of the Adirondacks." He has competed in the annual, three-day, 90-mile canoe race from Old Forge to Saranac Lake. He has backpacked a 50-mile adventure around Cranberry Lake in the Adirondacks. He

**UR FRIENDS:** Jamie Rindfuss '13, Bridget Kruszka '13, Socash, and Paul Kintner '12 hiked together for three days at the start of the Pacific Crest Trail. Rindfuss, Kruszka, and Kintner connected with Socash again 16 days into his trek.



**ITINERARY:** In June, Socash began what he hopes will be a yearlong adventure hiking three of the world's most demanding and storied trails for a total of nearly 7,000 miles. Beginning with the Pacific Crest Trail, Socash traversed Washington and Oregon, making it to California in early August.

has hiked all the mountains in New York with fire towers on them, too—29 in all.

Socash has also climbed to the highest point in seven U.S. states. And he's on a quest to explore every U.S. National Park. So far, he has made it to 12.

"Tyler's positive outlook on life and his vast array of outdoor experiences will serve him well on this adventure," says Seth Jones, the Adirondack Mountain Club's education programs coordinator and one of


Socash's hiking partners over the last few years. "I have no doubt that he will complete the whole thing and will be smiling nearly every step of the way."

As an undergraduate who majored in neuroscience, Socash did just about everything he could squeeze into his schedule. He was involved in five intramural clubs and participated in varsity tennis, cross country, and track. He was also a residential advisor and a teaching assistant, started the Fill Fauver school-spirit initiative (which evolved into UR BlueCrew), and was president of the Students' Association in his senior year. He also earned the Seth H. and Harriet Terry Prize for his commitment to student life.

After graduation, Socash wasn't quite sure what direction to take. So, he did what young men often do in such a situation: he called his mom. "She asked me what I was passionate about," he recalls. "I immediately responded, 'Hiking!' And she simply said, 'Do that.'"

During the next two years, Socash worked as a wilderness trip leader with the Adirondack Mountain Club, which meant living in a tent for months at a time. At the end of his second year as a guide, a friend suggested he talk to his alma mater about joining its admissions department. A few weeks later, Socash met with Jonathan Burdick, the University's dean of admissions and financial aid. He joined the department a month later.

As a conservationist who calls himself a "living Lorax," Socash

is committed to using this experience to show others the beauty of the woods and the value of protecting open spaces. "I'm youthful, I'm dedicated, and I'm backpacking for a year," he says. "I hope there's something about this trip that inspires others to get out and explore the world or to pursue whatever it is they are passionate about." 

—KRISTINE THOMPSON

*Tyler Socash chronicles his adventure at [tylerhikes.blogspot.com](http://tylerhikes.blogspot.com) and on Instagram, @tylerhikes.*



**SPECTACULAR:** Socash takes a photo at a precipice overlooking Spectacle Lake in Washington State's Alpine Lakes Wilderness.