

Hiker persevered during 2½ years

By John Johnston

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Denise Hill's 2,650-mile hike of the Pacific Crest Trail ended this month – 2½ years and 4,148 miles after it started.

The extra miles were due to obstacles the 52-year-old married mother of three from Indian Hill encountered along the way.



Hill

When faced with adversity, her thoughts turned to the challenges faced by cancer patients. She hikes for the Cheryl Rose Walden

Foundation (www.walkingforwalden.com), named in honor of her sister who died of breast cancer in 1998 at age 44.

Hill set out in April 2006, expecting to spend six months on the trail. It starts in Mexico and stretches to Canada through California, Oregon and Washington.

But that hike ended after 1,331 miles when Hill suffered a rib injury.

In spring 2007, she started over. She was about 400 miles from the finish a year ago when she slipped off a log while crossing a creek. She shattered her left leg.

With surgery, recovery and rehab behind her, on Aug. 5 she began the final segment at Trout Lake, Wash., 21 miles south of where she broke her leg.

One of her most harrowing days came a few weeks later, in

Another walk

Distance hiker Denise Hill, who has completed the Appalachian Trail and Pacific Crest Trail, will be honorary master of ceremonies for Saturday's Hike for Hospice, which benefits Hospice of Cincinnati.

The family-friendly hike – which is more of a walk – is 2½ miles along sidewalks, and fairly flat. Wagons and strollers are welcome. Register online at www.HospiceofCincinnati.org, or at the event, 4310 Cooper Ave., Blue Ash, starting at 9:30 a.m. The hike is at 10:30.

Washington's Goat Rock Wilderness.

Sleet had blanketed the area the night before. First, she and a fellow hiker descended a glacier. Then they were faced with climbing a steep, icy mountain.

"One misstep and I was gone. I was so scared. My body was shaking," she says. "I needed to get in control of my fears."

She did. The climb took hours, but she made it.

She completed the hike Sept. 14 and felt "total contentment," she says. "I did cry, and I did plant seeds right there."

Hill has been planting forget-me-nots in memory of her sister since hiking the Appalachian Trail four years ago. All told, she has hiked 6,322 miles since April 2004.