Our very early wake-up combined with eight teenagers eager to start hiking made for a morning of groggy but happy campers. The two-hour van ride meant some of us got extra sleep, but I was too focused on staring at the beautiful Utah desert. We finally arrived at the trailhead, quickly unpacked our trailer, and filled our packs with food and water. Lastly, we all applied globs of sunscreen to protect us from the harsh desert sun.

The first day of backpacking was longer than expected. The information about how far away the first campsite was about two miles off, so we arrived after an extra two hours of trekking through a canyon river. As painful and brutal as backpacking can be at times, the moment when you reach your campsite and let yourself fall backward onto your pack makes up for it. After a brief respite, we all got back up, set up camp, and began making dinner. We finished eating, and I quickly made my way to our tent, ready to sleep on the soft sand of our site.

Luckily because we hiked so much extra the first day, our first morning in the backcountry was not too early. Some quick oatmeal got us fueled for another day. The first two miles of the second day were steep, which is a massive morale killer, but a break at the top managed to restore us a little. After doing six miles, we realized we had already gone thirteen of the 15-mile trail. After some deliberation, our leaders decided to find a spot for us to camp. Another short and sweet night was capped off with an incredible sunset we watched from a small cliff.

The final morning was only a few miles, but confusion about the correct path added an extra mile. We eventually made it to our van, and we all collapsed into the relatively comfy seats before driving to the gas station to get some junk food.