

Seeing Your Career (and Life) **As an *Adventure***

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Hi, I'm J.

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<https://github.com/jonathantower/adventure>

What We'll Cover

- Adventure: a working definition
- A brief recap of my career (so far)
- Our 48 states adventure
- Lessons learned

My Hopes

- Spark ideas
- Permission to join in your own adventure
- A reminder

BUT FIRST...
If You Give \$100, So Will I!

bit.ly/swgr

"charity:water is a non-profit organization that provides clean and safe drinking water to people in developing nations. The organization was founded in 2006 and has helped fund 35,000 projects in 27 countries, benefiting over 9.5 million people."

- Wikipedia

"4/4 Stars"
- CharityNavigator.org



charity: water

What is Adventure?

“Engaging in an **unusual** and **exciting**, typically
hazardous, experience or activity”

Why Choose Adventure?

- Your adventure, already in progress
- Yes, and...

Stumbling Toward Software



- Bangladesh
- Apple IIe
- Jr High career test
- Creativity

Starting Out In Chicago

- Experiences
- Pace of living/learning
- Opportunities



Misadventure and Silver Linings

- Return to Michigan
- Software Architect
- Director of Software Development
- Accepting a promotion as a compliment
- Silver lining

World's Most Difficult Interview

- Patience
- Good from unexpected sources
- Working with an elite team
- Working remotely
- Encouraged to give back

The “Big Trip”

- A meetup
- Working remotely
- National Parks
- Dream to RV when we retire



An Unexpected Change

- Sudden changes in “perfect” job
- 30 second job interview
- Running low on funds
- Local offers

Dreams Come True

- MVP Award
- Starting Trailhead



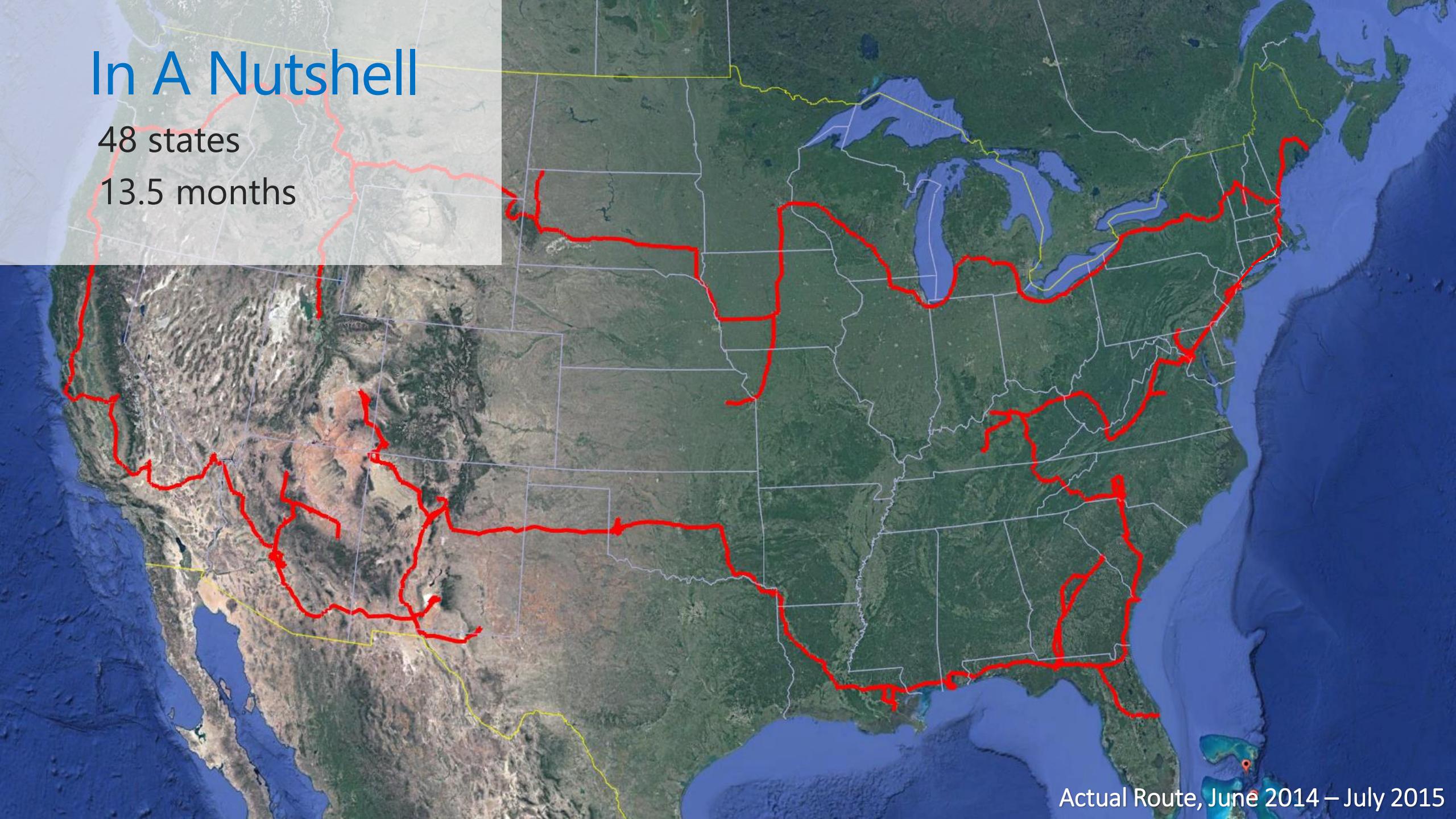
What We Did

Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, Ridgecrest, CA

In A Nutshell

48 states

13.5 months



Actual Route, June 2014 – July 2015

In A Nutshell

- Rented out our house
- Bought a 5th Wheel RV & Truck
- Wife left job to homeschool kids
- I worked remotely



Home, Grand Rapids, MI



48StatesProject.com

Benefits

- Closer as a family
- Great American history lesson
- Seeing so much beauty
- Learning about ourselves
- Visiting family/friends
- Annoying amount of stories



Barringer Meteor Crater, AZ

Challenges

- RV Maintenance
- Moving Days
- Limited Personal Space
- Internet Access
- Work Travel
- Loneliness
- Homeschooling Only Once



What We Learned

Thunder Hole, Acadia National Park, ME

Do Something Different

"The one who follows the crowd will usually go no further than the crowd. Those who walk alone are likely to find themselves in places no one has ever been before."

- Francis Phillip Wernig

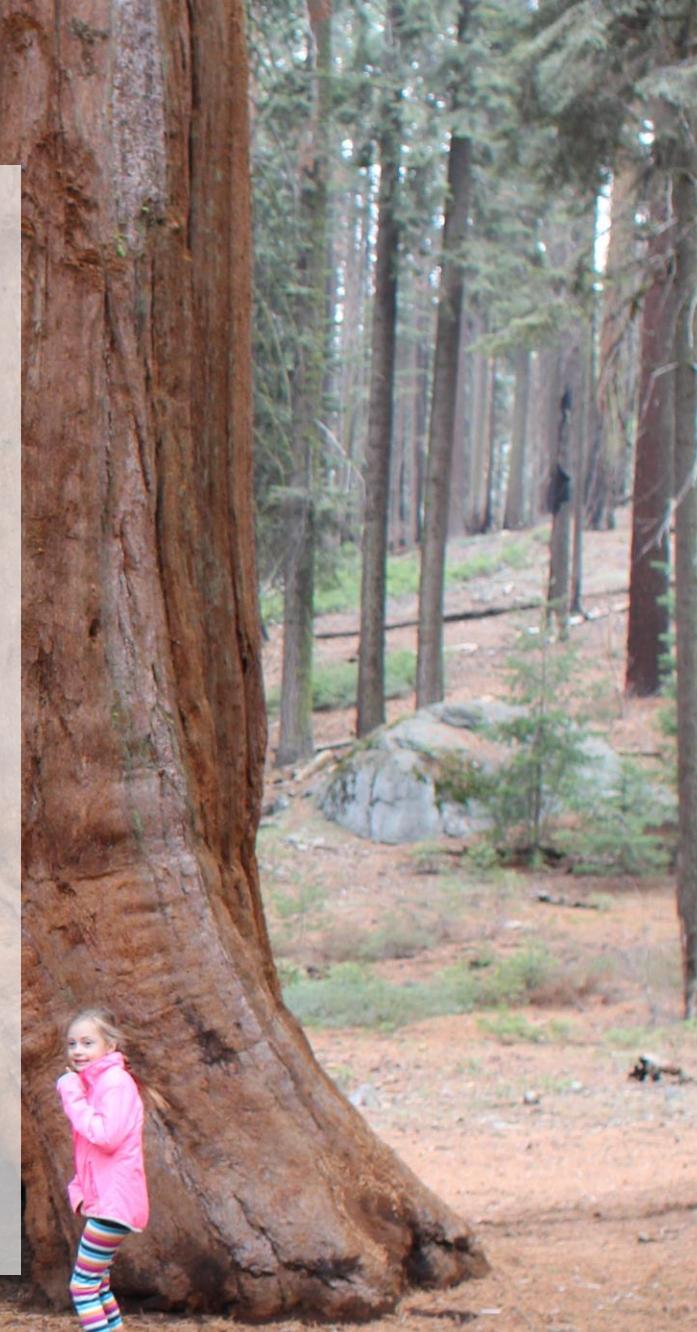


Fort Stevens State Park, OR

Take Risks

"Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favour all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no [one] could have dreamt would have come his way."

- W. H. Murray, The Scottish Himalayan Expedition (1951)



Kings Canyon National Park, CA

Carpe the Diem

"Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes."

- James 4:13-14, New International Version (NIV)

The background of the slide features a wide-angle photograph of a desert landscape, specifically White Sands National Monument in New Mexico. The foreground and middle ground are filled with numerous white gypsum sand dunes, their surfaces undulating in various directions. The light is bright, creating sharp shadows in the recesses between the dunes. In the far distance, a thin, pale horizon line is visible against a clear, pale blue sky.

People + Experiences > Possessions

"I must have things, but things must not have me."

- Jill Briscoe

White Sands National Monument, NM

Be a Local Tourist

Your diamonds are not in far distant mountains or in yonder seas; they are in your own backyard, if you but dig for them.

- Russell H. Conwell, Acres of Diamonds



Forsythe Park, Savannah, GA

Adapt and Be Flexible

"In life we cannot avoid change,
we cannot avoid loss. Freedom
and happiness are found in the
flexibility and ease with which we
move through change."

- Siddhartha Gautama

Sky Needle and EMP, Seattle, WA

Terroir

The “taste of a place”

Devil's Tower, WY

Rule of Anecdotal Value

I think the best way to live your life is to choose the experience that will have the most anecdotal value.

- Peter Sagal of Wait, Wait...Don't Tell Me



Don't Expect (or Want) Only Mountain Tops

A certain amount of opposition is a great help to a [hu]man. Kites rise against, not with, the wind.

- Lewis Mumford

Grand Tetons National Park, WY



You Are Nature, Not Separate From It

When one tugs at a single thing in nature,
he finds it attached to the rest of the
world.

- John Muir, The Yosemite

A Time For Everything

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.

-Ecclesiastes 3, New International Version (NIV)



Half Dome, Yosemite National Park, CA

Common Questions



Thunder Hole, Acadia National Park, ME

What About An Unadventurous Partner?

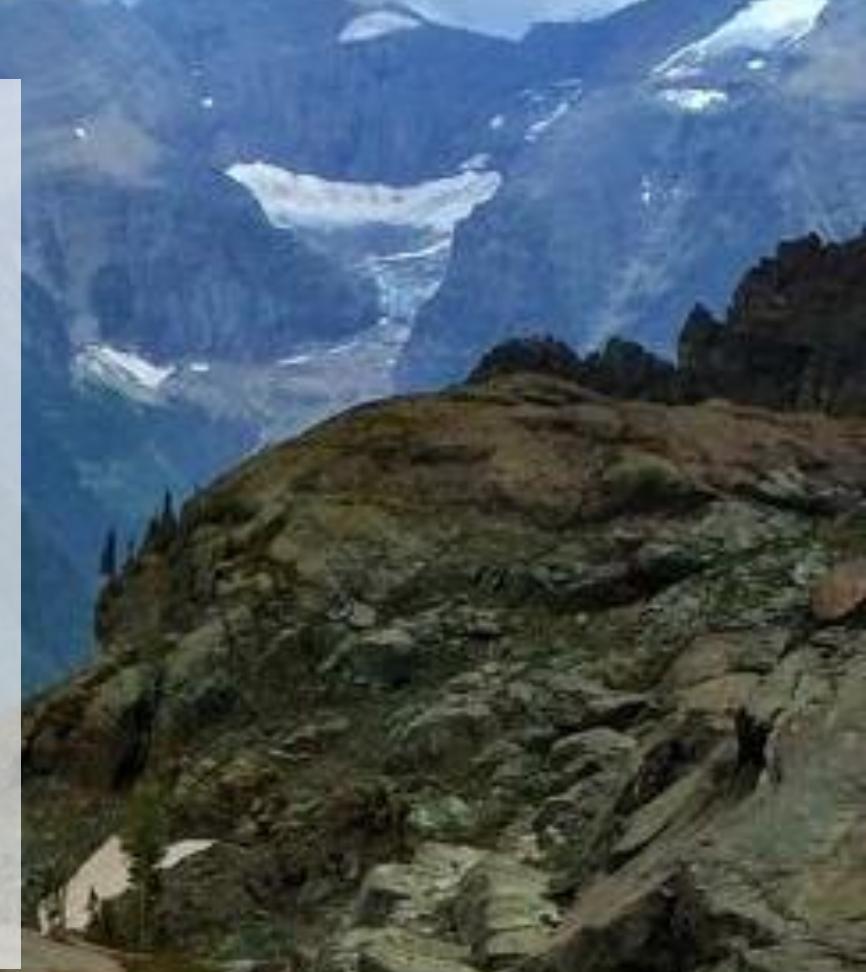
- Other partners
- Adventure in small doses
- Quid pro quo



Lake McDonald, Glacier National Park, MT

Preparing Kids for Adventure

- Know their limits
- Prepare them for what to expect
- Let them be involved:
A or B? not A or not?
- Less is more
- Creative rewards: Trail points



Boulder Pass, Glacier National Park, MT

What Was Your Favorite...

Place: Glacier National Park

State: California / Oregon

Surprise: Mardi Gras in New Orleans

Museum: OMSI and Musical Instrument Museum

RV Park: Black Canyon City, AZ



Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, WY



Trip Stats

Visited 48 states

Lived in 37 locations in 34 states

74 museums

28 national parks/monuments

21 state parks

17 military sites

187 other "unique experiences"

Thank You! Questions?

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