

The heroes of Sweden's The Long Trek have reached their goal.

Wednesday 16 August, 2023

Now all the brave hikers and fellow hikers have reached the finish line in this year's "The Long Trek 2023". Along the entire Vasalopp Trail, they've struggled based on their own abilities, finally arriving at the portal in Mora on Sunday. For the third year in a row, Sweden's longest hike for people with diverse abilities was organised.

— The physical aspect hasn't been a problem. Just having walked the Vasalopp Trail feels incredibly fun, says blind participant Knut Thorstensson.

Around 30 people participated in "The Long Trek" this year, an initiative started by Anders Andrae a few years ago. The journey began in Berga By in Sälen on the previous Saturday, July 29th.

By 2:00 PM on Sunday, August 6th, participants who had been part of the journey all the way or in parts had reached the goal: the Vasalopp Portal in Mora. By then, they had crossed hills and thickets, made possible thanks to modern technology.

The hikers used manual wheelchairs, all-terrain rollators from Trionic, and off-road electric wheelchairs from Zoom. Without these, the path wouldn't have been accessible, a prerequisite for everyone to enjoy walking in nature.

New for this year was that the trail had GPS tracking through the company Nordic Evolution. This allowed a blind hiker like Knut Thorstensson to navigate along with everyone else.

The journey itself hasn't felt challenging for Knut. Instead, it's a privilege for him to have been given the chance to complete the trek.

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Of course, the weather varied during the hike. Knut has experienced that.

— One can observe that there have been many mosquitoes. Then the rain mostly came during the night or in the morning. After that, it's been nice in the afternoon. Sometimes it has also rained while we were eating. But that's the Swedish summer for you.

Like everyone else, he sums up the journey as a success.

— I'm nothing but completely satisfied. There's no other way to be, says Knut Thorstensson.

About the Vasalopp Trail:

In the 1500s, Gustav Vasa flees from the Danish King Christian II. He seeks support in the parishes of Dalarna, but they reject him. When the people of Dalarna realize King Christian's evil intentions, they send out a group of men on skis to fetch Gustav back. They capture him, and he accompanies them back to Mora, where he takes on the task of leading the rebellion against the occupying power. 400 years later, a ski race is started to honor Gustav Vasa's memory. It becomes a success from the very first year. Now there is a yearly hike for disabled on the same route.

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