

Butler Eagle

Butler County's Great Daily Newspaper

MAY 14, 2018

Going the distance is goal for 'ultras' at Moraine park

By Jim Smith

Eagle Staff Writer

WORTH TWP — Around the crack of dawn Saturday, hundreds of so-called "ultras" took off running.

And running. And running. And running.

These adventure seekers/nature lovers/super competitors gathered to test their mettle on the backwoods trails at Moraine State Park.

They came for the eighth annual Glacier Ridge Trail Ultramarathon, renewing old friendships, taking in the spectacular scenery and sharing the vibe of those with a rage to run.

"The ultra community is one of the best that you can possibly get as far as runners," said attorney Vic Vouga, 60, of Harrisville. "Everyone's pulling for you to finish. Everybody has fun.

"It's a smaller community so you see a lot of the same people at races."

An ultramarathon is any foot race that exceeds the standard running marathon distance of 26 miles, 385 yards. That would explain the smallness of the ultra community.

"The trail community is very unique, very supportive," said David Murray of Portersville, a member of the race committee. "The people on the trail out here would help anybody and give anybody their food, their bottle, whatever,

"It really is a family community."

The Glacier Ridge Trail Ultramarathon features four

separate endurance races.

The shortest is a 30K. That's 18.6 miles for the metric system impaired.

There's also a 50K, or 31-mile race; a 50-miler; and a 50-mile five-person relay.

Sprinters aren't welcome.

It takes between hours and many hours for these runners to traverse and navigate the winding, hilly and muddy courses — naturally booby-trapped with rocks and tree roots.

On Saturday, there were 361 race entrants hailing from 16 states, including Texas and Colorado. The field also had a bit of an international flavor with 10 runners from Canada.

The youngest runner was 18; the oldest, 70-plus. Most of the participants were middle-aged or at least pushing that designation. The gender breakdown was fairly close with 40 percent of the field female.

"I love to be out on the trail," said 47-year-old Joella Baker of Harmony. "I race to have fun."

The founder and coach of the Get Fit Families Youth Triathlon team, Baker runs four or five triathlons a year. She also formed a running club at the YMCA in Cranberry Township.

She ran the 50K Saturday. It was her second GRT. She ran it four years ago.

"I enjoy the trail and the scenery. There's always something beautiful to see," she said. "That's the joy of trail running."



Runners set off for the 50K race in the eighth annual Glacier Ridge Trail Ultramarathon on Saturday at Moraine State Park.

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The GRT for ultras has become an ultra event.

"There's a lot of variety on the course that the runners can experience," said race co-director Tammy McGaughey of Chicora. "There are different types of terrain and beautiful views of the lake."

McGaughey and Murray know of what they speak. Both have run the GRT in years past.

It was the first time for Theresa Lyon, 54, of Manassas, Va., who made Saturday a family affair: she ran the 50K with her husband, Joseph, who turned 54 the day before, and their 22-year-old daughter.

A mother of three who spent nearly 12 years in the Marine Corps, Theresa guessed she's run 15 or so ultramarathons. She also ran the Boston Marathon last month.

Theresa, who grew up in Titusville, Crawford County, and happens to be David Murray's sister-in-law, proudly claims membership as an ultra.

"The ultramarathon community is a really neat group of people," she said.

Ultras, according to Theresa's take, are more chill than competitive runners. When it comes to running, they would rather take a relaxed approach than dial up the intensity.

For most runners Saturday, it was about completing the race, not leading the pack.

"I'm out here for the challenge," admitted Vouga, a repeat GRT participant who ran the 50K.

"I'm here to get ready for my second (ever) 100-miler," said 59-year-old physician Michael Henderson of Holt, Mich., who ran the 50K. He plans to run the longer race in Illinois this fall.

Back spasms thwarted his first try in January at a 100-mile race in Arizona

"I did 96 (miles), but had to stop," Henderson said. "It took me 32 hours."

Jimmy McGlothlin, a 39-year-old academic counselor from Pittsburgh, who did the 50K, had a simpler reason for running his second GRT.

"It's a stress relief," he said. "I have two kids."

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3 course records set in Ultramarathon

By Jim Smith
Eagle Staff Writer

WORTH TWP — Three course records were set Saturday at the eighth annual Glacier Ridge Trail Ultramarathon at Moraine State Park.

Most of the runners, or 88 percent, who entered their races finished, despite the elevated heat and humidity in the afternoon.

Just a few participants went off course and momentarily lost their way on the trails, and only one runner reportedly fell but was not seriously injured.

Proceeds were expected to hit or even top \$10,000.

It was another successful event, said race co-director Tammy McGaughey, who quicker than the fastest runner, deferred credit.

She heaped praise on the more than 100 volunteers who helped plan and piece together the event, coordinate and chart the course, and mobilize and man the aid stations for weary runners along the trail.

The stations, McGaughey noted, offered "real food," including soup, grilled cheese sandwiches and turkey wraps.

"Putting this together," she said, "is pretty much a full-year job. The serious planning starts in September and October."

Hundreds of man hours are expended for the cause.

"But I'm not complaining," she said. "It's a passion for us. I can't say



Participants in the eighth annual Glacier Ridge Trail Ultramarathon begin the 50K race on Saturday at Moraine State Park. An ultramarathon is any foot race that exceeds the standard running marathon distance of 26 miles, 385 yards.

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enough about our volunteers. We're family."

McGaughey and David Murray, a member of the race committee, also recognized the sponsors of the event.

Proceeds benefit Moraine State Park, Jennings Environmental Education Center and McConnells Mill State Park.

The following is a list of the top three finishers for men and women in each individual race and the winning relay team:

30K Men

- (1) Jamison Dohn, of Oakmont, Allegheny County, 3:02:19
- (2) Brandon Frazier, Brookfield, Ohio, 3:28:17
- (3) Daniel Fenstermacher, Sewickley, Allegheny County, 3:29:21

Women

- (1) Jamie Eakin, Washington, Pa., 3:11:47 (new course record)
- (2) Gwendolyn Musser, Butler, 3:14:14
- (3) Makenzie O'Connor, Pittsburgh, 3:16:01

50K Men

- (1) Sean Hulburt, Portersville, 4:28:24
- (2) San Goldstein, Pittsburgh, 4:28:58
- (3) John Graf, Ballston Lake, N.Y., 5:01:32

Women

- (1) Melissa Pastore, Fairview, Erie County, 6:01:31
- (2) Catherine Lyon, Manassas, Va., 6:27:23
- (3) Kelly Giles, Pittsburgh, 6:34:46

50-MILE Men

- (1) Jeffrey Adams, Buffalo,

N.Y., 7:52:38

- (2) William Huber, Zelienople, 8:31:02
- (3) Patrick Moran, Rochester, Beaver County, 8:52:02

Women

- (1) Anna Piskorska, Blandon, Berks County, 9:07:57 (new course record)
- (2) Stefanie Flippin, Northville, Mich., 10:12:00
- (3) Tami Sari, Polk, Venango County, 10:36:41

50-MILE TEAM RELAY

- (1) Glacier Pacers: Nathan Sydik, Butler; Jonathan Fleming, Butler; Tim Karls, Pittsburgh; Elijah Shekinah, Pittsburgh; and Mike Williams, Latrobe, Westmoreland County, 6:51:29 (new course record).

McGaughey noted that the Glacier Pacers' team was the post-race buzz. The team by more than one hour beat the old record of 8:07:00.