

YOU THINK YOU KNOW A TRAIL

by ben holmes, co-rd

It was a beautiful April morning and the weather was perfect for a nice long run. A nice long run on single-track trail would be a bonus. Add some really decent aid stations staffed by experienced ultrarunners and their families and some beautiful finisher's hardware and technical T-shirts, and you have an event.

Many aspiring ultrarunners enjoy Free State's offerings of 'tweener ultra distances of 40 miles and 100 kilometers, and it shows. This second annual version of the race had a substantial increase in attendance, with 48 starters in the 40 mile, and 34 starters in the 100 km. This is a Kansas City Trail Nerd event, but we always have some fine help at the Farside aid station, staffed by Stacy Sheridan and a few spunky and ultra-enlightened Kansas Ultrarunners Society members. The "middle of nowhere" Lands End aid station always gets double duty, and was once again staffed by Stacey Amos, Caleb Chatfield, and other spectacular help.

The race started without much fanfare at 7:00 a.m. sharp. The two loop 40-mile and three loop 100 km offer a few interesting spectator spots, even though the course is 100 percent single-track, and fully-wooded. The course had been exquisitely marked by Greg Burger, who elevates course marking to a fine art. Leading up to the race, we had had over two inches of rain earlier in the week, so we knew there would be a few sloppy sections to add to the rocky and root-bound "North Shore Norm."

Clark McLemore of Springfield, Missouri didn't seem to notice the



Kyle Amos wonders what just happened here in Kansas

mud. He ran an all-out assault on the trail and blazed to a new 100 km course record with a time of 9:23:18. Kyle Amos, last year's 100 km winner, and Dan Dehlin, last year's marathon winner, finished together and took second place honors. It was Dan Dehlin's

first ultra and he learned a lot from Kyle, our Trail Nerd ultra veteran. Timothy Barnes had a nice sub-ten hour third-place finish. Tammy Stone, last year's 100 km female winner (and last year's Leadville 100 female winner), came back to take first place again. Her sister, Cindy Stonesmith, took some convincing by the race director to go out for her final 21-mile loop, but she was glad she had; she earned a second place finish.

The 40-mile distance had a very close race going on. Michael Adams of Manhattan, Kansas smashed his old course record by 21 minutes and finished in 5:33:45. He had Gregg Buehler nipping at his heels. Gregg finished just three seconds behind. David Wakefield slid into third, followed by John Richardson. Lisa Trainor of Maple Grove, Minnesota blew away the old 40-mile female record by well over two hours, with a time of 6:03:02. Just fifteen minutes behind her, Roxanne Zobava took second. Local Trail Nerd, Emily "Mud Doc" Horn finished third, still ahead of last year's heat-zapped winning time.

Everybody had fun in the party-like environment. Trail Nerds like to have fun, and we really enjoy helping others to have fun at our events. Even though there were many successes, there were a few runners that had a not-so-spectacular-day on the course. For the last five 100 km competitors, this was the case, indeed.

GARY HENRY ADDS:

Boy, you think you know a trail. You lavish hundreds, maybe thousands of running hours on it, in all seasons and weathers, flowery to desolate, muddy to snowy, dry to muddy, muddy to muddy. You pick up the trash. You clean it after races. You photograph it. You brag to all your friends how beautiful the trail is. And then, in the big race, in front of the people you most want to impress – ultrarunners from across the nation – your lovely little trail beats the snot out of you.



PHOTO BY GARY HENRY

One of the beautiful obstacles at Free State

free state trail runs

LAWRENCE, KANSAS
APRIL 26 • TRAILS

100KM

1. Clark McLemore, 42, MO	9:23:18
2. Kyle Amos, 32	9:34:35
Dan Dehlin, 27, MI	9:34:35
4. Timothy Barnes, 40, KY	9:52:01
5. Tammy Stone, 46, CO	10:03:14
6. Josh Pool, 28, MO	10:28:50
7. Patrick Perry, 43, MO	11:01:52
8. Joe Timmsen, 37, IA	11:05:45
9. Peter Lazarus, 39, MO	11:10:25
10. John King, 35, MO	11:14:49

11. Shane O'Banion, 40	11:33:15
12. Cindy Stonesmith, 44, CO	11:42:50
13. Gabe Bevan, 35, MO	11:44:10
14. Scott Springman, 31, MO	11:53:50
15. Johnny Woodward, 32, MO	12:16:10
16. Greg Burger, 41	13:16:21
17. Jim Wilson, 48, MN	13:24:40
18. Willie Lambert, 46	13:25:50
19. Craig Duhn, 32, IA	13:52:35
20. L. Smelser, 56	14:28:50
Adam Monaghan, 25	14:28:50
22. Gary Henry, 51	14:38:30
23. Gregg Mrkwicka, 42, MO	15:19:30
24. Benjamin Coffey, 28, WI	15:23:30
Mark Koester, 28	15:23:30

40 MILES

1. Michael Adams, 37	5:33:45
2. Gregg Buehler, 36	5:33:48
3. David Wakefield, 33	6:02:08
4. John Richardson, 54, MO	6:02:55
5. Tony Clark, 30	6:03:01
6. Lisa Trainor, 48, MN	6:03:02
7. Roxanne Zobava, 32, GA	6:18:42
8. Stuart Johnson, 48	6:35:53
9. Dann Fisher, 44	6:53:42
10. Phil Sheridan, 51	6:55:46
11. Scott Hill, 29	6:59:45
12. Dan Volk, 30, NE	7:05:50
13. Jeff Quint, 29, MO	7:09:39
14. Jules Myers, 39	7:20:51
15. Emily Horn, 30	7:26:12

Results continued on next page

PROMISE LAND

ANYONE WITH THE WILL TO FINISH CAN

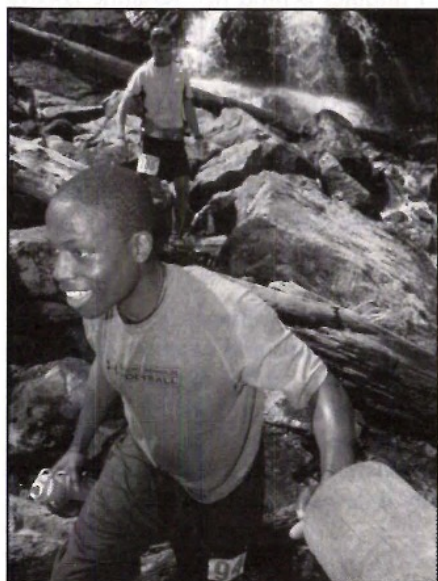
by keith knipling and david horton, rd

KEITH:

This beautiful course climbs up and over the Appalachian Mountains from the east, crosses into the Shenandoah Valley and then returns up and over back to the start. The run crosses the Blue Ridge at Apple Orchard Mountain (4,225 feet), the tallest mountain in central Virginia. Typically held the last weekend in April, it is also a feast for nature lovers. While spring has sprung in the valleys it is still winter on the ridges, where the flora up high have yet to sprout and bloom. Runners are magically transported several weeks in time as they climb and descend. The lack of foliage also means that the panoramic views from the mountaintops are largely unobstructed.

While the race is undeniably difficult, Race Director David Horton allows a generous ten-hour cutoff, meaning anyone with the will to finish can. It is this unique combination of beauty, difficulty and accessibility that makes Promise Land a universal favorite for anyone who has done it.

The 7,300 feet of climb is what I measured in 2007 using a Polar S625X heart rate monitor; the measured altitude from the Garmin Forerunner 305 (which is derived from GPS trilateration) is not as precise as the barometric altimeters used in the Polar HRMs.



Jerry Ayantola and Scott Carson cool off near the falls

When I think of spring in Virginia — green leaves, budding wildflowers, swollen streams, and a symphony of songbirds — Promise Land is the thing that comes to mind. It's a race that really puts our beautiful mountains on display, and is certainly one of my favorites.

DAVID:

Of the four ultras held in our area, the Promise Land is the most scenic one of the bunch, as not-

ed above. We also have a great start/finish area where most of the runners camp before the race with a pizza feed on Friday night and a big cookout on Saturday after the race. This year's race was the third race in the Beast Series and the second race in the Lynchburg Ultra Series. Because of this and the event itself, we attracted 263 starters and had 256 finishers. We had a deluge of rain on Friday night, a definite tent-testing night, and a deluge on Saturday, near the ten-hour cutoff. In

between there was a lot of heat that many of the runners had difficulty with in an early season event where they were not adjusted. The men's race was won by Sean Andrish, from Leesburg. Sean was smarting from a fourth place finish in the nearby Terrapin Mountain Marathon just four weeks earlier. Keith Knipling wrote in his race report, "Sean Andrish took things out hard from the get-go and was out of sight within the first quarter mile. I train 20 - 30 miles a week with Sean, but I've never seen him go like that in our weekday runs. Apparently our 'speedwork' and 'hillwork' days are his recovery days." Andrew Ponder, Richmond, winner of the Terrapin race, was a distant second. Justine Morrison and Amy Sproston, from Washington, D.C., were the class of the women's field with Justine easily winning. Of note, there were over 20 Liberty University students running the race with over half of them being female. I think that speaks highly of the future of ultrarunning for women. One problem that we may have in the future is the fact that the owner of the Promise Land Youth Camp may be selling the camp. I don't know what we will do if that happens. In the meantime, as Knipling says, the Promise Land 50K will continue to be a rite of spring for many ultrarunners on the East Coast.



Harland Peelle pushes up the stairs

Free State results continued from previous page

16. Brandon Klink, 34, IN	7:33:45	27. Laurie Underwood, 48, TX	8:20:09	38. Jim Davis, 66	9:35:38
17. Brian Daldorph, 50	7:36:18	28. Patrick Stich, 35	8:20:15	39. Duane Grigg, 57, MO	10:04:00
18. Chris Turner, 47	7:41:03	29. Tim Black, 35	8:28:45	40. Phil Wright, 64, CA	10:15:01
19. Mung Sang Yue, 34, MO	7:48:30	30. Sharon Parsons, 48, CO	8:46:13	41. Hui Qing Yin, 32, MO	10:26:05
20. Deb Johnson, 48	7:48:41	31. Casey Yungler, 37	8:58:28	42. Karl Keltner, 46, MO	10:43:59
21. David Timmsen, 32, IA	7:50:20	32. Peter Leon, 39, MO	8:59:59	43. Jane Herzog, 44, WA	11:07:50
22. Scott Giddings, 39, NE	7:51:47	33. Shannan Garcia, 30, MO	9:04:53	44. Samantha Deschler, 31, IA	11:16:10
23. Scott Fitzgerald, 38	7:58:46	34. Bryan Tlamka, 33, NE	9:06:51	45. Cheryl Splain, 48, OH	11:25:20
24. Jared Struck, 27,	8:03:41	35. Thomas Skinner, 61, GA	9:17:21	46. Melissa Briggs, 40, MO	11:57:50
25. Patrick Mills, 56, IL	8:04:11	36. Jeremy Bolt, 38, MO	9:34:35	Chris Hoffman, 41, IA	11:57:50
26. Robert Revels, 30	8:19:46	Sarah Kniffen, 33, MO	9:34:35	48. Ed Payne, 60	11:58:30