

## FLINT HILLS TRAIL

## THE SATISFACTION OF WITNESSING SUCCESS

by Eric Steele, RD

Each Epic Ultras event leaves me absolutely fried for several days afterward as I struggle with the massive amount of infinitesimal, yet very important, details involved in heading up and putting on one of the highest-quality ultra events in the Midwest and the greater ultrarunning community at large. Indeed, I have now become highly aware that having a somewhat OCD type of personality is a huge asset when it comes to directing ultras.

What keeps me dedicated is that I consistently reap a higher benefit for my efforts when I get to witness the undying resolve and raw determination poured out from the hearts and souls of runners into the accomplishment of their running goals—and the pure satisfaction, along with the personal transformation, that many achieve upon crossing our finish line.

The Inaugural Flint Hills Trail 40 Mile & Marathon, held May 31, 2014 in Ottawa, KA, once again offered that feeling of satisfaction. One hundred and ten runners from 13 different

states were officially registered, and a total of exactly 100 runners showed up to toe the line on Saturday, with 65 starting the 40-mile event. When our event came to an end Saturday evening, 63 runners had finished—a 97% finishing rate, which is a significant number considering the “slightly steamy” weather we encountered, with a high of 84°F and humidity averaging 69%. Needless to say, we were incredibly stoked at such a remarkable turnout (and finisher's rate) for an inaugural event that we only announced a little over four months ago!

In the 40-mile race, Danny Ponder, 55, of Norman, OK, ran a steady and patient race to take first place overall and become the male champion, while smoking the course with a time of 5:58:27. He was followed by sandal-shod Matthew Perkins, 39, of Lee's Summit, MO, in 6:23:27 and Bruce Layne, 49, of Moore, OK, in 6:25:29. Kodi Panzer, 33, of Marion, KS, dominated the women's field to become the female champion and finished 11th overall with a time of 7:04:15.

Second-place woman was Emm Foster, 55, of Republic, MO, in 8:01:31, followed closely by Toni Bohannon, 46, of Universal, IN, in 8:01:55. Honorable mention goes to the Plate brothers from Tulsa, OK, with 12-year-old Cameron Plate finishing 12th overall in 7:29:27 and his 14-year-old brother, Brandon Plate, finishing a couple hours later in 9:35:16.

All runners were expertly cared for at each of the staffed aid stations and finish line throughout the day by the Epic Ultras Brigade/Staff. We couldn't have done it without them, nor would we have wanted to.

I have been sincerely honored by all of the positive feedback I have received since the Flint Hills Trail event. Witnessing numerous runners take on and complete distances they never thought they would be capable of is among the most rewarding of all experiences a race director can ever imagine, and I am eternally grateful to continue to help co-create the running experiences of a lifetime for everyone involved. 



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RICK MAYO/MILE 90 PHOTOGRAPHY

Danny Ponder cruises over the last three miles to a win, setting the bar for this inaugural race



RICK MAYO/MILE 90 PHOTOGRAPHY

Kodi Panzer early in the day on her way to a first-place women's finish

## FLINT HILLS TRAIL | OTTAWA, KANSAS | MAY 31 | ▲ 1,2

40 miles | Elevation gain/loss: Flat | This is an out-and-back course from Ottawa to the western edge of Osawatimie, Kansas.

| 40 MILES                   |         |                             |         |                           |         |                         |         |
|----------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|-------------------------|---------|
| 1. Danny Ponder, 55, OK    | 5:58:27 | 5. Matt McClasky, 31        | 6:40:55 | 10. Ciro Ortega, 44       | 7:01:08 | 15. Dan Malik, 29       | 7:35:05 |
| 2. Matthew Perkins, 39, MO | 6:23:27 | 6. Bill Baker, 63, TN       | 6:46:36 | 11. Kodi Panzer, 33       | 7:04:15 | 16. Clay Brethour, 45   | 7:36:29 |
| 3. Bruce Layne, 49, OK     | 6:25:29 | 7. Ryan Volkert, 28, MO     | 6:49:25 | 12. Cameron Plate, 12, OK | 7:29:27 | 17. Jim Harris, 51, MO  | 7:41:42 |
| 4. Daron Pratt, 44, MO     | 6:27:02 | 8. David Box, 38            | 6:52:31 | 13. Scott McCreight, 49   | 7:33:53 | 18. Ronald Trignano, 41 | 7:43:59 |
|                            |         | 9. Michael Pfannenstiel, 48 | 6:56:27 | Albert Mauro, 47, MO      | 7:33:53 | 19. Emm Foster, 55, MO  | 8:01:31 |

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|                                       |          |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| 20. Toni Bohannon, 46, IN             | 8:01:55  |
| 21. Jon Wilson, 41, MO                | 8:02:03  |
| 22. Heather Cotten, 39                | 8:03:34  |
| 23. Tommy Ramirez, 48                 | 8:06:12  |
| 24. Cary Savage, 51                   | 8:10:56  |
| 25. Andrew Servaes, 42                | 8:12:57  |
| 26. Krystal Brown, 49, OK             | 8:17:33  |
| 27. Laura Range, 48, MO               | 8:22:42  |
| 28. Brian Smith, 50                   | 8:26:25  |
| 29. Clinton Burnett, 29               | 8:35:17  |
| 30. Polly Choate, 43, OK              | 8:39:40  |
| 31. Topher Hartley, 40, AR            | 8:41:02  |
| 32. Paul Endacott, 49                 | 8:43:34  |
| 33. Jeff Pettett, 53, AZ              | 8:49:06  |
| 34. Chinyere Obasi, 52, NE            | 9:08:21  |
| 35. Chris Clay, 49, OK                | 9:14:20  |
| 36. Kelly Pfannenstiel, 51            | 9:14:59  |
| Katrina Jones, 42, MO                 | 9:14:59  |
| 38. Clay Zapletal, 52                 | 9:16:51  |
| 39. Tom Rogers, 42, MO                | 9:17:44  |
| 40. Cal Dewitt, 51                    | 9:24:13  |
| Shannon Callahan Bostick Heitkamp, 36 | 9:24:13  |
| 42. Thomas Skinner, 68, GA            | 9:24:57  |
| 43. Brandon Plate, 14, OK             | 9:35:16  |
| 44. Robert Hall, 57                   | 9:35:26  |
| 45. William Sprouse, 45               | 9:36:30  |
| 46. Erica Carper, 42                  | 9:38:12  |
| 47. Kenny Jones, 46, TX               | 9:38:59  |
| 48. Alissa Sebastian, 43, MO          | 9:46:07  |
| 49. Jorge Gonzalez, 56, TX            | 9:56:36  |
| 50. Julia Edwards, 40, MO             | 9:58:29  |
| Robert Dewar, 68, MO                  | 9:58:29  |
| Randy Edwards, 47, MO                 | 9:58:29  |
| 53. Melissa Melton, 43, MO            | 10:19:00 |
| 54. Karen Riddle, 61, TX              | 10:19:02 |
| 55. Shonna Bruno, 40, IA              | 10:38:36 |
| Julia Dagen Shull, 33, IA             | 10:38:36 |
| 57. Ken Childress, 54, OK             | 10:50:34 |
| 58. Gina Simrell, 41, NE              | 11:13:39 |
| 59. Bryan Knaus, 37, IA               | 11:13:40 |
| 60. Jeremy Newman, 32                 | 11:39:00 |
| Ben Schears, 33                       | 11:39:00 |
| 62. Beth Gulley, 40                   | 12:01:54 |
| Sheri Bevis, 37                       | 12:01:54 |