

# AURA NEWS

Arkansas Ultra Running Association

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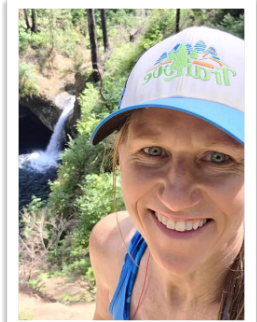


## From the Editor

The AURA Ultra Trail Series got off to a great start with the Full Moon 50k. There wasn't a full moon for this year's race but the RD's more than made up for that and really lit up the night! Sharon, Chris, and Ronnie did a great job in their first year of directing this event. The board would like to offer a big Thank You to them for their hard work and their dedication in not only preserving this AURA event but adding an extra element of fun while keeping the runners safe at the same time.

Next up will be the Scorchin' Squirrel Trail Run at Ferncliff on August 14th. 19.5 miles for our UTS participants and the 15.5 for our UTS Lite participants. There are also 10k and 11.5 mile options for those of you not competing in the UTS this year. Runners will be rewarded after this event with pool time fun and a cookout. What a perfect way to spend an Arkansas summer day!! Feel free to bring something yummy to share and plan to hang out after. You don't want to miss the fun that Joel and Noelle have in store for you so if you aren't registered you better hurry up - [Register Here](#)

-Peace, Love, and Trails-  
Stacey



# My 2021 Hardrock 100

By Stan Ferguson

I was cautiously optimistic that my 7<sup>th</sup> Hardrock 100 would be the one where I finally come in under 40 hours. While one must always keep in mind that anything can happen at Hardrock, I have been happy with my running for the past year, had hit all my key training elements, and would get to spend time at altitude a full three weeks before the run. I was glad that I had put in and been selected in the lottery to participate this year.



PoDog and I met near Jefferson, CO on Saturday, June 26<sup>th</sup> to set up camp and kick off our acclimation by seeing some of the Colorado Trail. We felt this worked out quite nicely, getting in a good bit of actual running, rather than just hiking peaks as we've commonly done in the past. In all we covered 140 miles during nine days on the trail. When we migrated the CO trail assault camp to Leadville, we were joined by Brett Bassham, and finally when we moved to Silverton the week before Hardrock, Dale Humphrey arrived. Those three, plus Jimmy Sweatt would be my crew and pacers. Many thanks to them for their help! Brett and Dale are former out-of-staters who've taken advantage of Arkansas' relatively lax immigration policy. For some reason they were convinced that helping an Arkie homeboy was part of their work Visa requirements.

Since my run duration was about the same number of hours as a conventional work week, my recounting will be based on eight-hour shifts, Monday-Friday.

Monday I mainly focused on taking it easy as I covered the early climbs of the counter-clockwise course direction. Dives Little Giant and Green Mountain are legitimate climbs, and I wanted to make sure not to push too hard while folks were still clumped together. The day wound down with the Pole Creek section. This part, between Maggie Gulch and Sherman, is the only part of the course that I have only seen during the event itself—due to it not being very convenient to get to for early scouting. Some years I've had difficulty following the precise course, and was especially apprehensive this year because new course markings were being used and we were unsure if they would be marmot proof. This turned out to be a non-issue, as there were many more course markings used than in prior years, and either they were put out late enough, or with some kind of marmot deterrent—such that almost none of them appeared to be affected by critters. The only real storm I encountered during the whole event was just before starting to drop down into Sherman. It was short-lived, and the lightning was not very close. While running some of the nice downhill into Sherman, I clipped a root or rock that was obscured by grass and took a tumble. I typically have a lot of close calls when running, but don't actually fall very often. So this was annoying.

My Tuesday started off with the last little downhill bit before pulling into the Sherman aid station. There, a nice lady named Leslie cleaned up my hand that was cut up from the fall and applied some bandages. To keep from disturbing the bandages, and avoid really messing my hand up if I fell again, I wore gloves of some type from this point on—even when it got warm. After a short, mostly road stint to the Burrows aid

station, came the long climb up Handies Peak—the high point of the course, and definitely THE major climb of the first half of the counter-clockwise course, taking about two and a half hours. Several hundred feet below the summit, I paused to fill up my bottles from an auxiliary flask I had in my pack. Steve McBee approached, and we mused about how close we must have been for the last hour or so, without either one of us realizing it. We finished the climb to the summit together, encountering some light rain and sleet—but nothing too bad. We descended a thousand feet or so rather quickly, before stopping to take in a few calories. Steve and I did the last few miles and finished the Bighorn 100 together back in 2006, when neither one of us had a day to write home about. I have to admit that I had entertained the thought of maybe, things turning out that we could finish this Hardrock together. But that was not in the cards. After the descent into Grouse gulch, Steve made the incredibly difficult, but most certainly correct decision to halt his run for health reasons. I absolutely send best thoughts, wishes, and strength to Steve as he tackles his next challenge.

Tuesday wrapped up with the nearly two hour hike up the road to Engineer pass. This is where Jimmy's pacing segment began. In my previous three Hardrocks, Jimmy had taken me in the final 10-12 miles (depending on course direction). That always seemed appropriate, because to me Jimmy is one of the integral pieces of Hardrock. He's been in Silverton each of the past 27 years—stretching back to when the AURA founders would go. Some crewing restrictions this year brought on by a fire restoration closure ruled out a pacer change at that point, so his gig was moved up in the rotation.

Wednesday was the nighttime segment, and commenced with the final mile into Engineer aid station after the cross-country drop-down from the pass. The stop was quick, and I focused on making the most of the longest downhill on the course. This is mostly nice for running, but you do have to put out of your mind that for a lot of it, in the dark just a few feet to your left is a sheer drop of several hundred feet. At Ouray, the low point of the course, I met Dale for the next climb up to Virginus pass. This is about eight miles mostly on slightly uphill road, then three miles of steeper climb. The final approach is three short pitches—the first and third of which are stupid steep. At the top is Kroger Canteen, an aid station that sits in a notch in a high, thin ridge that separates two big bowls. It most resembles something like Frodo would encounter on his way to Mordor. Dale and I got there just in time to see the sunrise, which was pretty cool.

Thursday I started the descent to Telluride. In some years I've felt like I ran this steep downhill fairly well, but this time not so much. A combination of my left knee feeling a bit gimpy, and some heel blisters made it difficult to run except on less steep and very smooth sections. Getting to Telluride in this direction is bittersweet. It's 28 miles from the finish--so that seems good, and it's also a beautiful town to drop into. But there's SO much work yet to be done. Brett joined me for the next section: a cruel 4400 foot net climb up to Oscars pass. Brett had previewed his section with PoDog a week earlier, so was familiar with the false summits. I obviously have experienced them before, but it can still be crushing when you've been out

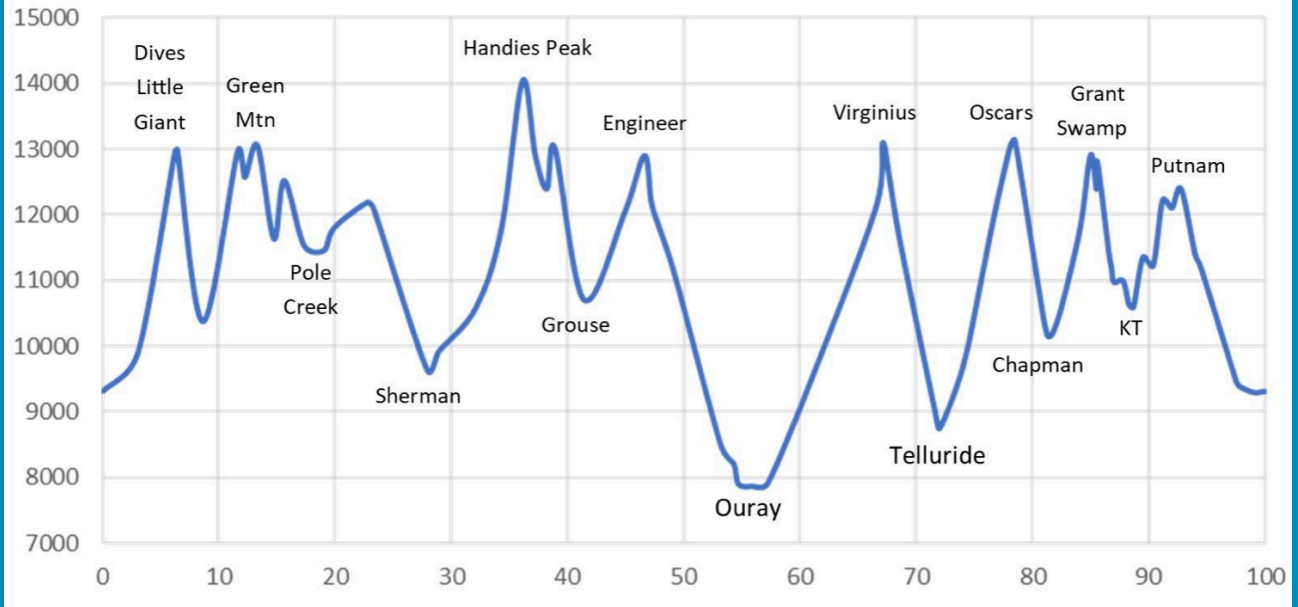
for nearly 30 hours and just want to get done. This eight-mile section seems more like 18. Finally arriving at Chapman, PoDog was ready to see me in for the last 20 miles, starting with the nearly 3000 foot climb over Grant Swamp pass. Grant Swamp in this direction features a notorious several hundred foot climb up a scree slope at the end. That's difficult—to be sure, but in the scheme of things is actually a small part. More grueling is the steep roller-coaster approach that seems to never end. My climbing was really starting to slow down at this point, but we finally made it to the top.

So, Friday starts near the top of Grand Swamp pass. The descent from there starts off VERY steep, and never presents much that I can easily run. At the KT aid station I loaded up with about the only thing I could envision working with my now delicate stomach: saltine crackers and Coke. From that point there's a final couple thousand foot net climb that you meet in three evil sections. By the last steep pitch up Putnam ridge, my slow climbing was taking place in intervals between long rests. Finally at the top, PoDog and I took in the fabulous view from the last summit of the run. My other attempts in this direction had me at this point after dark, and often it was hard to find trail markers among the numerous faint trails going down. Between it still be light, and there being many more markers than in the past, it was a breeze this time. – Well, except that I couldn't run for crap. A 40-hour finish would have gotten me in a little after dark (10pm). But to make that happen in the last ten miles, I would have had to move much better on the last climb and been able to run some after that. As it was, I felt reminiscent of those winter nights when you would have liked to have been home from work before dark, but just had a little too much to do. A couple of times the week before, I had run to Mineral Creek and back from town, and knew that it was exactly 2.2 miles to the finish from there. When we got to the creek crossing, I realized that just a little bit of hustle would get me in under 41 hours, so that became the goal. At 40:52, I got to the finish in front of the Silverton high school gym, kissed the rock, and #7 was done.

An adage I've always held is that, if you have a weakness, Hardrock will find it. Even if the weather is the best ever. My ultimate goal of a daylight finish never really vanished until a trifecta of issues kept me from moving faster Saturday (real time) afternoon. But it was my best finish of seven, so I'm definitely glad I gave it a shot.



# Hardrock 100 Counter-Clockwise course elevation



# Full Moon 50

## Message From Sharon, Chris & Ronnie

WHEW! What a whirlwind weekend that was! It was so good to see so many familiar and new faces at Full Moon this year! We certainly kicked off the Ultra Trail Running series in style.

We are really excited and honored that we were selected to helm this wonderful race. We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did!

Together, we raised over \$2,000 for the Logan Wilcoxson Memorial fund benefitting the Arkansas Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, as well as \$2,000 for the Arkansas Ultra Running Cross Country fund. This year's beneficiary will be the Perryville High School Cross Country program.

Next year we hope to be able to contribute to additional Title 1 school cross country programs here in Arkansas, with the intended use to help fund equipment purchases for students. We are happy to be able to make this investment in their runner's success.

Thank you to our sponsors: AURA, Hammer Nutrition, Arkansas Outside (Joe Jacobs - you are the GOAT), Pickle Sports Pickle Juice, go! Running Coaching, and Brian Bowen with Spira.

THANK YOU to our amazing volunteers! YOU made this race a success.

We have the best runners. You guys are our family. Let's take good care of each other.

Registration will open for 2022 in August! Be on the lookout! We are already scheming.





The Scorchin' Squirrel is a trail race through Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center's 1200 acres located just 10 miles west of Little Rock. There are 4 distance options: a 10k-ish (1 loop), 11.5 mile-ish(2 loops), 15.5 miles-ish (3 loops), or 19.5 miles-ish (4 loops). All distances are approximate-ish. Each loop passes through two aid stations.

We will not be going on the road. We will not be going down the slide. The majority of this run will be on jeep roads with one big downhill near the beginning and one big uphill near the end (same hill, different direction!) There will be creek crossings, how many depends on how much it has rained.

The race will start promptly at 7 am to take advantage of the cool temperature at that time...and then it will get hotter. You have a choice to run the 10k (more like 7 than 6), but you have to make this choice at 5ish. If you choose to NOT head back to the start line and head back on the loop then you will be on track to do the 11.5ish distance, but again at mile 10ish, you have to make the decision to head towards the finish line or do another loop. By this time it is starting to get hot and will only get hotter, so what are you going to do!?! This can continue until you finish your fourth loop and then you have to go back to the finish line and to the swimming pool and cook-out. Poor you! There will be some hard decisions to make on this run...but is your quest to get the golden nut or just be nuttier than a squirrel and run this race?

There will be time cut-offs at the aid station which may make your decision to do another loop obsolete it will be out of your hands. The main aid station that you will hit is the one that has always been there and that is also the decision making station. Please be sure to let the volunteers know if you are doing another loop. We will mark your bib for each loop you do.

This is a cupless race. Save the environment. Bring your water bottle and collapsible cup (available at Fleet Feet - where packet pickup is on Friday...thought I would do a little plug there! Haha!)

[Click Here to Register](#)

## Upcoming AURA Events



*Arkansas Traveller*

*100*

*October 2-3*

[Click Here to Volunteer](#)



[Click Here for Information and Registration](#)

Sunday, Aug 29th at 7am

**Please remember to take CASH so that you can DONATE.** You are getting a lot with this FREE AURA EVENT!!

RD, Tom Aspel said that there will be food and a t-shirt for you so bring a donation, your chair, swimsuit and appetite for fun. The post run festivities are sure to leave you smiling.

This event will be for both the UTS & the UTS Lite



## Hot Springs National Park Trail Run

**18 Miles      October 16, 2021      8am**

[Click Here For Race Information](#)





## 2021-2022 Ultra Trail Series & NEW Ultra Trial Series Lite

Good Luck to All of Our Participants

[Click Here to Register for UTS](#)

RACE DATE	EVENT	UTS	UTS LITE
<b>JULY</b>			
7/17	Full Moon	50k	25K
<b>AUGUST</b>			
8/14	Scorchin' Squirrel	20M	15M
8/29	Mt Nebo	14M	14M
<b>OCTOBER</b>			
10/2-3	Traveller	100	
10/16	HS 18M	18M	18M
<b>NOVEMBER</b>			
11/27	Sunset 6-12-24	Any Distance Minimum 26M	Any Distance
<b>DECEMBER</b>			
12/4	LOViT Marathon	26M	14M
<b>JANUARY</b>			
1/8	ABF	26M	17M
1/15	OT Switchbacks	50k	25k
<b>FEBRUARY</b>			
2/5	White Rock	50k	25k
2/26	LOViT 100	100k or M	
<b>MARCH</b>			
3/?	Styx n Stones	30k	15k
3/18-20	3 Days	50M	20k
<b>APRIL</b>			
4/9	OT 50	50M/50k	50k
4/15/21-22	Choose Your Own	Marathon	Half
<b>MAY</b>			
5/14	Mt Magazine	18M	12M
5/21	Catsmacker	20	12

If you register for an event but can not make it PLEASE unregister or email the Race Director in a timely manner. This is becoming a VERY big problem.

## Thanks For Renewing & Welcome to our New Members

Most memberships expired on June 30th

A big sweaty welcome to our new members! We have several new members from around the state and a few from our neighboring states. We would like to welcome them all to the AURA Family!

Much appreciation to those who have renewed your membership. Special thanks to those who made a donation to the club when you signed up. We are a nonprofit and every little bit helps in our efforts to keep our running community connected, our trails cared for and a legacy of races moving forward.

Feel free to share the love. If you have friends who are new to trail running please invite them to join the Arkansas Ultra Running Association to help them stay connected.

[Click Here To Register or Renew Your Membership](#)

[Click Here To See If You Need To Renew](#)

[Click Here To See Events In The Ultra Trail Series](#)

### TRAIL MAINTENANCE GROUP

Podog said that the first meeting will likely be on the OT the weekend after the Arkansas Traveller 100. He feels it will work better to demonstrate and train on the trail. If you are interested please send him an email.

A bonus for helping with this group is the opportunity to earn points toward the Ultra Trail Series High Mileage Awards

