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### Trail Rail Run: 2013

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# 2013 Trail Rail Run

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Case Study Report 2013-3

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to provide the organizers of the inaugural Trail Rail Run with an understanding of their race participants and the money they spent in the local community of St. Regis. The Trail Rail Run course utilized old railroad grades from both the Northern Pacific Railroad and the Milwaukee Railroad.

## **Methods**

The population of interest was participants of the 2013 Trail Rail Run. Surveys were completed through a web survey that was sent to the email addresses of participants. Of the 233 emails sent to addresses provided by the organizers of the race, 23 came back as “undeliverable”. The final response rate was 160 completed surveys for a 76 percent response rate.

## **Results**

Of the 160 respondents, sixty-four percent (102 people) of all respondents to the survey were from Montana and 36 percent (58 people) were from out of state or country (see Table 1 and 2). Of those who were from Montana, 16 percent (16 people) were from Mineral County while 85 percent (87 people) were from other Montana counties. The mean age of respondents was 43 years of age. The mean group size was 2.01 people. Of those who responded to the survey, 59 percent (94 people) reported that they spent a night or nights away from home. Of those who spent a night away from home, the average number of nights spent in Montana was 2.87. The average number of nights spent in St. Regis was 2.33. Results of all other questions in this survey can be found in Appendix A and B.

**Table 1: Out-of-state Respondents**

<b>Place of Residence</b>	<b># of respondents</b>
Idaho	20
Washington	16
Oregon	4
Arizona	2
Georgia	2
Mississippi	2
Nebraska	2
Ohio	2
Texas	2
Arkansas	1
Massachusetts	1
Missouri	1
Tennessee	1

## **Expenditures**

Expenditure information was asked of all respondents but only those who reside outside of Mineral County were included in the expenditure analysis. The survey asked that they report their best estimate of the total amount of money they and their family (if applicable) spent in St. Regis area in the following categories: accommodations, food, transportation, retail/services, gratuity, entertainment/recreation, and licenses/entrance fees/admissions.

Table 3 presents the expenditure data of only the respondents who reported spending money in the categories. The mean expenditure of those who spent money for each category can be found along with the percentage of people who reported that they spent money in that category. The last column provides the total dollars spent by respondents who reported spending money in each category. The total reported expenditures for respondents who spent were \$18,855.77.

**Table 3- Expenditure Data in St. Regis**

<b>Expenditure Category</b>	<b>Mean expenditures of attendees who reported that they spent money in these categories in St. Regis</b>	<b>% of respondents who reported spending money in each category in St. Regis</b>	<b>Total dollars spent in each category by respondents who spent in St. Regis</b>
Motel/Hotel/B&B	\$154.04	32%	\$7,856.04
Auto rental	\$133.75	3%	\$535.00
Gasoline	\$56.33	44%	\$3,943.10
Restaurant/Bar	\$50.56	39%	\$3,185.28
Entertainment/Recreation	\$34.81	10%	\$556.96
Retail goods	\$34.79	15%	\$834.96
Campground	\$23.40	7%	\$257.40
Groceries/Snacks	\$19.45	42%	\$1,303.15
Gratuity	\$13.71	18%	\$383.88
Local transportation	--		
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$18,855.77</b>

# Appendix A- Results

## Trail Rail Run

Are you a resident of Montana? **64.0%** Yes **36.0%** No

Was attending or participating in the races your primary reason for being in the area?

**91%** Yes **9%** No

What other reasons were you visiting? (X all that apply)

**50%** Vacation/recreation/pleasure **0%** Shopping  
**75%** Visit friends/relatives **0%** Business/convention/meeting **0%** Just passing through

During the Trail Rail Runs, what type of accommodations did you stay in?(X all that apply)

**67%** Hotel/motel/bed & breakfast **6%** Rented cabin/home  
**10%** Home of friend/relative **5%** Resort/condominium  
**12%** Private campground **2%** Guest ranch  
**7%** Public land camping **0%** Second home/condo/cabin

How did you hear about The Trail Rail Run? (X all that apply)

**41%** Internet **8%** Flyer **3%** Newspaper  
**36%** Word of mouth **6%** Posters **3%** Retail outlet  
**19%** Radio **6%** Magazine **1%** Direct mail  
**14%** Group or club **4%** Email from event planners

How long ago did you make plans to attend The Trail Rail Run?

**2%** Today **4%** 1-7 days ago **16%** 1-4 weeks ago **72%** 1-6 months ago **5%** over 6 months

When might you come to the Trail Rail Run again?

**72%** Next Year **23%** Within five **5%** Never

Please rate your overall satisfaction with the Trail Rail Run.

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	N/A
Organization of the event	57%	37%	6%	1%	0%	0%
Event staff	71%	26%	3%	1%	0%	0%
Cost of the event	43%	45%	9%	2%	1%	0%
Location of the event	69%	26%	4%	1%	0%	0%
Concessions available	40%	37%	18%	3%	0%	2%
Number of people at the event	44%	44%	13%	0%	0%	0%
Parking	48%	38%	12%	1%	0%	1%
Sound system	42%	40%	12%	3%	0%	3%
Variety of activities	37%	38%	17%	5%	0%	4%
Signage/directions	46%	37%	9%	7%	1%	0%
Cleanliness	62%	36%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Availability of restrooms	47%	41%	7%	4%	0%	1%

**What option best describes the group with whom you attended/participated in the Trail Rail Run?**

- 22% *Self*
- 22% *Couple*
- 21% *Friends*
- 19% *Immediate family*
- 10% *Family & friends*
- 5% *Extended family*
- 1% *Business associates*
- 0% *Organized group/club*

**Including you, how many people were in your group?**

- 16% 1
- 41% 2
- 11% 3
- 18% 4
- 9% 5
- 1% 6
- 1% 7
- 1% 8
- 0% 9
- 1% 10
- 3% *more than 10*

**Please indicate what age groups are represented in your group?**

- |     |                    |     |                    |
|-----|--------------------|-----|--------------------|
| 10% | <i>0-5 years</i>   | 38% | <i>35-44 years</i> |
| 5%  | <i>6-10 years</i>  | 34% | <i>45-54 years</i> |
| 4%  | <i>11-17 years</i> | 25% | <i>55-64 years</i> |
| 6%  | <i>18-24 years</i> | 9%  | <i>65-74 years</i> |
| 33% | <i>25-34 years</i> | 1%  | <i>75 and over</i> |

**What best describes your annual household income in US dollars?**

- 5% *Less than \$20,000*
- 12% *\$20,000 to 39,999*
- 14% *\$40,000 to 59,999*
- 14% *\$60,000 to 79,999*
- 25% *\$80,000 to 99,999*
- 21% *\$100,000 to 149,999*
- 1% *\$150,000 to 199,999*
- 7% *\$200,000 and over*

## Appendix B- Open-ended Responses

**Question 29: Please tell us what you liked about The Trail Rail Run.**

Well run, especially for a first year. Very good communication. Happy to see monitoring of participants via bike and at the aid stations.
Well organized, friendly folks at aid stations
Volunteers were knowledgeable. Food was good. Can't beat free beer.
Very well organized, especially for the first year!
Very well organized for a first year race. Location was great.
Very well organized and well run event! The volunteers all did an amazing job and the professionalism of the event was top-notch (state-of-the-art timing, etc.)
Very Scenic. Crossing the train trestles was fun. Staff and volunteers were very friendly.
Very organized and a friendly crowd. The route itself was beautiful and flat :)
The volunteers were wonderful.
The volunteers and the overall race organization was great! So was the food afterwards (way to go on getting chocolate milk--great end of race protein fix!!) Also, I love the tech fabricate hoodie that you gave out is great--original and one I will wear a lot (as opposed to a lot of other race t-shirts...) course was pretty good overall.
The volunteers
The venue, finish line, beer and food afterward, and number of people.
The trail was wonderful - I felt it was well organized and like the fact that all people participating in the race were accounted for at the check point. Transportation worked great the people were wonderful.
The trail was great. It was nice to have the bus to the start.
The staff was friendly. Aid stations were nicely done. I thought you all did a great job, especially for a 1st run!!!! I loved the free shake!!!!!!
the small town atmosphere
The shuttle buses and ease of getting from the finish line to the HeliPad parking and vice versa. The grade was very nice (since I usually have to run through hills) and the dead rattlesnake only gave me a slight heart attack.
The scenery was awesome. Great volunteers at the aid stations...well organized.
The scenery and weather was great. The course signage was excellent.
The scenery and people were great! The 2% downhill grade was a plus. :)
The scenery
The running trail--great to be in the forested areas.
the run was along a beautiful trail
The people, choice of distances, well organized, variety of fuel @ aid stations, volunteers, competitive timing, non-pavement.
The people of St Regis were friendly and helpful. The location was beautiful.
The opportunity to run on that rail bed.

The location was great. I grew up in western Montana so it was great to go back home. The people were very friendly.
The homemade cookies. Everyone was friendly and helpful. Well planned out. Seemed to go without a hitch.
The first half had beautiful scenery and was beautiful to run.
The event was very well organized.
The enthusiasm of the providers, the goodie bags, the t-shirt design for the 10k is awesome, the race course, the town, the lunch afterward, the volunteers, the shuttles.
The course was unique and closer to home than most ultra-races.
The course was great, and I liked the laid back environment.
The course was beautiful and the park it concluded in was a great venue.
The beautiful scenery, organization and especially the volunteers. Also, the out and back so we could go through the tunnel (50k)
The area is great. I love utilizing the old railroad.
The amount of runners, not too many, is what I liked best.
That it was a trail run and luckily it was a cool day.
Staff, very friendly and helpful volunteers, beautiful course.
Small group close to home
Small event, scenery, trestle and RR tunnel. Loved having a small meal afterward.
Simplicity, family friendly
Setting, support, shirt
Scenery! Friendly volunteers, free huckleberry shake (only got that one other time, at the Mesa Falls Marathon in Idaho), loved the RR tunnel and trestle on the 50K/50 miler.
Scenery, terrain, slope of the trail, Organization
Scenery was great and the people felt like family
Scenery was awesome, the volunteers were very nice and supportive. The course was relatively easy. The aid stations were well stocked and had water. The announcer at the end of the race was terrific! Overall this was great!!!! I list improvements below but even if none of them happen, I would still do this race again and recommend it to my friends. Bravo, well done!!! :)Thank you volunteers!!!
Really wonderful people - the race organizers and all the volunteers were great, as were the other racers. Very fun, very well organized.
Race Director and her readiness and organization, scenery, aid station volunteers, point to point trail route, unique age division rr spike award. Friendly and helpful people in St. Regis, on and off the course. Atmosphere and environment of the community. Great inaugural event. I probably will not run it again but am happy for the opportunity to be a part of this event.
Professionally organized. Most topics anticipated prior to becoming time critical. Enthusiasm and pro-active approach of the organizers. I liked getting multiple communities and groups involved and participating. I liked the choice of different distances for runners (10K, 30K, 50K and 50M). The bus shuttle to starting locations was very good idea for traffic management and scheduling. Everyone involved came away with a good feeling of the event and a desire to participate next year. This event could easily become the premier event in Mineral County each year!!!
PB&J at the aid stations and railroad spike age group award and homemade cookies at the last aid station. Also the Pulled pork sandwich, fruit cup, and Tru Moo Chocolate milk at the finish
Overall course. Aid stations and what they had at them.

Organization was first rate. Well marked trail. Good check points. Nice feed and beer at the finish.
Organization and volunteers.
One of the best finish lines (location, music, food, beer, ambiance) ever.
Off-road (no pavement) running in the countryside without motorized vehicles. The variety of options (50-mile, 50K, 30K, 10K runs). The shuttle bus service. The individual timing of runners. The random photos which became available to everyone.
Nice volunteers. Cool weather. Generally well-organized.
Nice straight forward run and a short bus ride.
Nice scenery and pleasant volunteers
Nice course, great aid stations, wonderful volunteers, well-marked course, very well organized, unique awards, fun finish line area, including the cold beer :)
Mineral County is beautiful and the race was well organized.
Low key Friendly volunteers No mile markers, just orange tape to guide Scenery & route
Loved the scenery/views. Weather was perfect. Volunteers were great!
Loved the scenery and other runners. Volunteers were all super friendly and helpful. The free food and beer after was very much appreciated!
Loved the route, the friendliness of the race staff, the quaint little town!
Love it, was a volunteer
Location, scenic route, people (runners and organizers), organization, safety, bus shuttle service, food and people serving it, finish line announcer
Location, race course, people, safety, organization, food
Location was great. The free food and beer was great!
Location
Liked it - good early season training run for other ultras
Jennifer was very helpful. I was glad that the results reflected the true distance of the event. I also loved the finish area - very festive and lots of space for everyone.
It was well organized, the trail was in good shape, the food/beer were good afterward.
It was very well organized! Mineral County was beautiful! Looking forward to next year!
It was very organized, except for the measuring of the distances. People were very friendly, the food was great.
It was unique and located in a beautiful area that I wanted to spend more time in. Scenery was lovely, and it's always really nice to run a long race where you're not holding up vehicle traffic or dodging parked cars. That part was great. As for location, I had not spent much time in St. Regis before, and while I had to leave shortly after the race, I enjoyed driving through and seeing parts of town you can't see from I-90. The park is very nice and volunteers were great. I was impressed. Bus shuttles were great, parking area was easy in-out. Good cooperation with the Forest Service. I also had been to Quinn's Hot Springs before, so I planned ahead to detour there afterward. I only saw a handful of other racers there. I thought it would be more popular, but I also know Quinn's has limited pool access, giving priority (understandably) to their overnight guests. I enjoyed it and felt like it was the best kept secret of the area.

It was gorgeous. Some smaller/inaugural runs I have attended have been very poorly organized with routes poorly mapped. That was not the case with the Trail Rail Run. Everyone was friendly; it was clean; the route was clearly marked.
It was affordable, close enough, a good distance, good staff and organization, fun afterward, and great vibe.
It was a wonderful experience. I had a great time.
It was a fun event.
It was a beautiful run.
Interesting course
I really liked the use of the trail.
I loved this run! I participated in the 10 (turned 12K) with my family and boyfriend- it was not only a gorgeous trail and very scenic but also relatively flat making it a great run! It was so much fun to run with a group and I loved how friendly and helpful the staff was along with all the goodies we got! I'll definitely be participating again next year and recruiting more friends and family to do it with me!
I loved the views and the beautiful region. I also appreciated the food and beer at the finish line.
I loved the principle of using the rails trails to host events that draw people to the area. I wish more of the US, especially the Northwest, was tour-able by rail trail. What a great way to use public lands and make the great outdoors available to a diverse population. (I have mountain biked in the area, and made other trips to the area just to use the trails.) The range of distances was great. The volunteers were outstanding! And hats off to the race director for pulling off such a terrific first-year event. I also really liked how different business and groups were advertised and provided information at the aid stations and in the registration bag. Even though I am familiar with the area I learned a thing or two.
I loved the location of the race, trees for shade, downhill:), time of year. The temp couldn't have been better. Great beer and food after.
I loved the location
I liked the route, the local folks and all the volunteers
I liked the gentle decline of the trail along the river and trees. The support of the folks at the aide stations was fabulous. Thanks for finding so many really nice people to staff the stations.
I liked the first 20 - 25 miles - most scenic
I liked the entire event. I thought it was well run and the course was nice.
I liked that it was a trail run. I liked the variety of distances available. I liked the location.
I enjoyed the entire day. The race course was beautiful and everyone was helpful and friendly. Just awesome.
I enjoyed the course, and the general area and community. I always enjoy the sportsmanship of the other runners in the race.
Great scenery!
Great scenery and fantastic route. Wonderful place to run with fantastic aid stations. Everyone was so friendly and ready to help at the drop of a hat.
Great organization for first year. Beautiful. Great groups running aid stations.
Great idea for a run. It's unique and fun. Trail runs are a wonderful alternative to pounding pavement.
Great event, good people, free beer and food, great trail, timely. Nicely done.
Great energy, well organized, beautiful place, easy buses.
great course!

Great course!
Great area to run, nice choice of run distances.
Generally very well organized, with a very enthusiastic community. T-shirts, goodie bags, etc. were all very nice. Thank you!
Fun! Saw a different view of the valley & St Regis river. Loved the free lunch and beer
Fun run, nice scenery.
Friendly staff, scenic trails
Friendliness from the St Regis area
Forest, mountains. Friendly, helpful aid station volunteers
Food at the end. Goodie bags. Run wasn't crowded
Family friendly. While the runner is out, the family can do stuff while waiting.
Everything
Event was fun and people were very friendly helpful.
Easy trail
Distance from home and that it was a place we had not been to before.
Big enough to be fun, great people participating/staff/volunteers...but not too big...it could grow & still be great!
Beautiful trail! Wonderful staff, awesome t-shirts! Great food, great beer!
Beautiful trail that was just right in complexity. very friendly volunteers
Beautiful sights and being with family
Beautiful scenery! Fun people! Enthusiastic announcer!
Beautiful scenery!
Beautiful scenery, wonderful day!
beautiful scenery, well-organized
Beautiful scenery, well put together, nice people, good route
Beautiful run. Being with family.
Beautiful location, excellent volunteers, wonderful participants.
Beautiful location by the Clark Fork and nice trail for most of the run. Not too crowded and the aide stations were well manned. Nice to have several run distances to choose from. (I did the 30 K and my husband did the 10 K)
Beautiful course. Perfect time of year to travel to Montana.
Beautiful course well-marked trail, awesomely nice people at the aid stations.
Beautiful course for an ultra-marathon. Volunteers were extremely friendly and helpful.
Beautiful area, friendly aid station, great food and beer!
Awesome people! Especially those at the aid stations. THANK YOU!!!!
Already did this in previous emailed survey
Aid station workers were great! Even though I didn't eat the food at the aid stations, it was good to have several options. Scenery was incredible! Having to check in at all the aid stations to keep track of all runners Having photographers along the way to take pictures

**Question 30: Please tell us what you did not like about The Trail Rail Run.**

Wouldn't mind knowing mileage at the aid stations. Finish trail was very soft and uneven--easy to roll an ankle.
Would have liked the 50K shirt to be tech rather than 100% cotton. Large rock in the middle of the trail really beat up my legs, but that's not something the race could control.
Would have been nice to see more booths at finish, sporting good companies, health food samples, skincare etc.
Wishes there would have been markers along the trail of distance. Volunteers did not seem to know how far the trail was. However much further to the end.
We were not told until the last minute that the race was actually 12k, not 10k
We need to provide a smoother running track into the County Park. The fire line trail for the last 0.5 miles was extremely difficult on tired legs. It was too lumpy to maintain a pace.
Was within earshot of the freeway for too much of it (reminded you too easily you weren't totally in the middle of the forest). Final 20 miles had some very boring sections. Going over the bridge and the tunnel at mile 20 seemed contrived. Also, getting up to that section cost a lot of time because of the steepness of the trail. Sections of the trail between 30-40 miles were too rocky--made it very tough to run.
Was hoping for more food and beverage choices after the race.
Took a wrong turn once and gained about a mile. Trail was pretty loose gravel.
Too long a wait from bus to the start of the 12k.
Too close to the interstate (which I recognize you cannot control but we are ultra-trail runners not used to highway noise).
Too close to the freeway —always hearing traffic noise.
They didn't actually have measurements for the race distances. Just seems lazy when you could at worst measure with an ATV and a GPS. The large diameter river rock makes for poor running conditions. Gravel is okay. 3" rock is suboptimal.
There was some confusion at the starting line for the 12K. We were just standing and talking the next thing you know the gun goes off. The Local Festival should have been closer to the finish line.
There is a big difference between a 10k and a 12k. When you sign up and prepare for a 10k and your shirt says 10k, you expect to do a 10k. I have seen not seen a real explanation of this mistake or an apology for it.
The volunteers were excellent, but I wish some of them at aid stations knew where they were in the race. Didn't know how far they were in the race or how far it was to the next station.
The very last portion into the park was a bit "lumpy" although I did not turn my ankle that was a concern of mine. Would have preferred to run in the street actually at that point.
The trail was rough in spots with too much large chunk gravel.
The surprise extended miles :)!
The surprise after being dropped off at the beginning of the 10K run. Race organizer announced it was actually a 12K run! My Garmin watch clocked the length at 7.78 miles which is a long 12K! They also said there was a support station (water and cookies) at the 2 mile mark; it was around 3.

The shirt handed out for the 50K.
The rocks, more difficult to run on this Rails to Trails than expected. Not the races fault however.
The only issue that was reported back to me from the 9 other runners in my group was the last section of ground on the trail that was mowed - many of us rolled our ankles or hurt our knees - maybe the road would be a better option in the future
The monotony; I would have preferred to have a more active thinking trail with changing terrain.
The mileage was off for almost every race. Aid station in 2 miles was closer to 3 1/2. Aid station in 5 miles was more like 2 miles away. The 10K was really a 12.5K (which I was comfortable with, but others were not).
The loose gravel did trip us a lot, did not like leaving the trail for aid stations, (took a wrong turn once). Really did not like the end of race on pavement.
The last quarter mile was especially rough on my legs. My hips/knees were significantly sore from the previous 18 miles and the uneven ground did not feel well.
The last part of the run was a little rough. You want to be able to finish strong in a race and I felt like the stretch from the road into the park was pretty uneven, so I was conservative in finishing so that I didn't roll my ankle.
The last half mile to mile before finish line was rough on the man-made trail. Being worn out at the end already I felt very unstable toward the end on that terrain.
The last 200 yards--I felt the trail just as you came off the paved road to the grassy area at the finish was not well prepared, and it was very difficult to maintain your pace.
The last 20 were a bit busy - long time near the Interstate.
The flat, straight 15 miles of trail from mile 25-40, right along the freeway.
The first year of a race must be hard to think of all of the details because there were quite a few kinks to be worked out. The communication between the st. Regis summer Fest and the trail rail run was also poor and nobody seemed to know anything about the other thing however they were advertised as a combined event.
The final segment of the run across the US Forest Service land was too irregular to maintain a pace. It needs to be improved before next year.
The fact that the 30K ran over a mile long
The end of the run where we ran through the cut grass was uneven...a better trail would be great to finish on. An elevation profile on the map would be good too.
The end of the run went through a "cow pasture" it was very difficult to walk in. The music & activities were far away from the finish line.
The end of the race coming into the park. That was terrible! It would have been better and safer to have run on the pavement. The ground/grass before the dirt trail was terrible uneven, a real ankle killer.
The course was not as scenic as I imagined.
The 10K was more like a 13K. Either let people know the actual distance well in advance or shorten it up so it really is a 10k.
The 1 mile on so on black top...have neuropathy in my feet & that pounding was brutal on my poor little feet...loved the trails!
That I dropped out. Blisters.

Surprise 2 miles!
Sections in the middle of the course were hard on the legs and feet.
Running on the uneven grass area prior to the finish.
Running on large rock clasts does not do wonders for hips and ankles. I know there isn't anything you can do about that though. The last stretch (after the road bit) was very uneven footing. After 50k, 50 mi, etc. we are all super exhausted and our legs are tight. One little twist and we go down, so that last half mile was very dangerous (specifically the grass trail next to the road that was about 50 yards).
Running in the ditch from the pavement to the trail thru the trees to the park
Run was too long - put the 1st 30k aid station along the course. Need another bathroom @ the start.
Registration pick up is difficult if from out of town; course isn't on the most beautiful part of the trail system; length different than advertised and aid stations not sufficiently placed for length; 10 K shirt would be better as a tech shirt also and sized male/female
Registration and everything was spread out. Also, waiting for an hour to start the 10k because I rode the bus.
Race start for 30k Having to leave the trail and cross under the interstate for the first aid station Distance being so far off what it should have been
Proximity to I-90 was a bit disconcerting
Portions of the course were too rocky.
Packet pickup - Friday only for long races at first, and had to go to two locations in St. Regis (Travel Center and visitor center).
Overall it was really great. Couple of inputs for the future: could have used a few more port-a-johns along the course...some of the gaps were a bit long between bathrooms toward the end of the race. Also, the course description seemed a bit off the actual course as there were some pretty good uphill grades thrown in beyond the climb to Lookout--maybe having a good elevation depiction on the web site next time would be helpful. and, the course by my garmin 310XT watch was .87 miles long, which may not seem like much...until you have already run 50 miles :) And, the finish on blacktop and then that ankle-twisting path along the road and into the park may need to be re-thought--maybe cut out one of the out-n-back jogs to an aid station to make it an even 50, and then smooth out the finish a bit to save some weary ankles :) GREAT RACE!!
Only one porta potty at the start line (30k). No fuel at the last aid station when a lot of people really needed it for the last couple of miles. I did not like that pulled pork was the only option; I couldn't eat it. The fruit and beer were great!
Only one porta potty at the 12 K start, running through the uneven cut grass along the finish line and the uneven dirt trail at the very end.
Occurred while Ironman was going on in Coeur d'Alene (more difficult & expensive to travel). The little hand dug trail the last 1/4 mile was rough footing. Not easy to run.
Nothing- you nailed it! :)
Not much happening at the finish by the time a lot of the 50 milers got in.
Not knowing the mileage. The map and information did not mention the additional mileage of going into the towns for check-in. I like to know where I am for my pacing.
Not an accurate marking of the course and description of the course

No significant problems.
No mile markers. The run was longer than 30K so it was hard at the end to know when it was over, especially without mile markers. The last part of the trail into the park was hazardous on very stiff, tired legs. Suggest another route to finish line.
No bananas at aid stations. next year, also, this is a given, have the aid station folks no exact mileage to finish etc.
Needed more porta potties at race start 1@10k
Liked everything
Last 1/2 mile. Was a bit lumpy and bumpy and was pretty tired so concerned about turning my ankle, although made it through unscathed :-)
Last 0.3 miles were on very unstable terrain. Would rather have come down from the street into the park at the finish.
Lack of mile markers, and helpers along route had no idea how much further we had to run, oh yes and finding out it was a 12k not a 10k at the starting line. Also, we were told aid station was 2 miles into route, but it was about 4 miles into route. And the end section of the route (the portion in the grass alongside the road) was lumpy and horrible. I can't believe someone didnt sprain or break an ankle there when we were very tired. Could have used one more water station, with water avail to grab while you run by (we had to fill cup ourselves and therefore stop). These negatives could have caused health or safety issues for the runners. Please fix for next year!
Lack of end of race expo. Felt the activities in the park were disjointed. Would have liked to see more of an after the race event to keep people around to support all the different waves of people coming in. The last leg of the race where we ran on the mowed grass and trail was awful! Was afraid I was going to hurt myself at the very end.
It caught me and my friends off, that the course was actually 33.6 miles long, instead of being a 50k. I'm not complaining about the extra 1.6 miles, but when I arrived at 32 miles, i was expecting to see a finish line and not a bridge to run over. For the price of the race, and the distance, i was upset that I didn't receive a medal for finishing.
Inadequate signage at finish line (e.g., location of drop back pick-up area, parking area); too few announcements about awards; only one porta-potty at 30K start; trail a bit too stoney; not knowing the 30K was actually 19.2 miles;
I would have liked to have a pickup in Missoula. I could have helped with that.
I would have loved to get my "free" massage at the finish, but the masseuse was gone. The trail, while beautiful, was very rocky. I loved visiting the towns along the course, but some of the "exits" from the trail were hard on the body due to hills and hard surface roads. I would have loved to have music at the finish, but I enjoyed the opportunity to talk with the other athletes.
I wish that the summer festival was more connected to the finish .line.
I wasn't a huge fan of the last little segment of the run (the mowed ditch area and the Forest Service trail through the trees). Runners are about out of gas at that point and it was tough and tricky terrain for that part. Seems like there'd be a good chance of trips or twisting a joint in that part. I know some runners weren't huge fans of the hitting the asphalt and running over Little Joe bridge but that didn't bother me.

I was the first 50M female to cross the line, but everything was already over by the time I arrived. I was looking forward to the festivities which everyone had promoted, but the park was nearly empty. Although I hit every check-in point I missed my first drop bag as I thought it was at a different location. It would be nice to have a reminder from the volunteers or someone to point them out. I had no trouble locating my second one, but missing my first one could have been disastrous.
I really can't complain. I have run hundreds of races and this was at the top. I was curious why no one checked bus passes and we didn't use the chip timing at the start, but those aren't big issues.
I really cannot think of a thing that was lacking.
I ran the 30k and was pretty surprised and irritated by the end that it was over 3 miles long than I expected.
I have pretty delicate feet, and the trail surface was not ideal for me --more stones, pebbles, and uneven surfaces than I was expecting (especially coming into the finish). I didn't like learning at the starting line that the 10k was actually a 7.6 mile race. There were a couple points along the trail where I wasn't certain I was still on course.
I guess I don't have any complaints, really.
I don't know if it would have been possible given the start/end times of each distance but there really should have been an awards ceremony.
I didn't like leaving the trail during the race to reach the aid stations. The course was two miles longer than stated, so the back tracking was unnecessary after the initial aid station during the 50k. Also the final trail was extremely difficult to run on after completing so many miles. It reminded me more of a fire line, than a trail. I thought the goodie bag was, for the most part, a waste. Nothing really beneficial to the race at hand. Would have liked to see things like sunscreen, better samples of race fuels, and a more useful type of water bottle. The most disappointing thing for me, was the absence of a finishers medal or award. A t-shirt is expected just for registering in my opinion. For the distances achieved by the 50 milers, 50k, and 30k, I feel a finishers award was deserved. It was my first race over 13.1 miles, and I trained for 7 months for the 50k. Other than the feeling of achievement I felt personally, I wanted to see something I could display proudly to show for it. Especially at the cost of the race overall. Even though I wasn't competitive enough for a top 3 award, I was surprised at the lack of thought in the award for those to did win one. A railroad spike was a good idea, but it would have been much better to see a spike attached to a small plaque, with the reason for the award engraved into the wood or on a brass plate.
I didn't come in first
I did not like the pain and suffering.
I did not like the course. The terrain on the road was not good for running (lots of loose rocks and gravel with washboard/potholes). I got huge blisters. I also would have preferred it to get further away from the freeway. We were also disappointed that the kids race never happened after hanging out and waiting for it to begin for an hour.
I did not like the 30k shirts. They were too large.
I did not like running under I-90 to get to the water stops.

I did not like running on the sections that were like river rock. It was painful on my feet and tiring on my body (but not much you can change there!). The aid stations need some help. It would be useful to have Vaseline and band aids at every station. They also should be ready with food and drinks ie. peel and slice the oranges, open the giant bag of pretzels so I don't have to do it, have water and HEED poured into cups... It would be nice to have different foods at each station too (ie. more cookies, crackers, bananas, M&Ms...).
I did not like leaving the trail to go to the aid stations in towns ... it was a big mental hurdle to have to leave the trail and then return to it. I'd much prefer to have the aid stations set up closer to the actual trail.
Gravel was tough on feet. the distance markers were iffy. the last bit of trail through the forest was very uneven
Footing on trail. Too many cobbles. Seemed for many miles to be an ATV trail with no tread for running. Not a great trail for running.
Food afterwards
Flat-flat-flat! I forgot how much hills give you an opportunity to use different muscle groups. But then, that is the character of this race and I'd do it again anyway. A rabbit trail here or there to explore some of those side hiking trails would be nice.
Finding out at the start of the "10K" that it was actually more like a 12K was a bit of a surprise. I loved the run and I felt great, but I could see how a new runner might be put off or discouraged by this (especially if it were someone doing their first 10K). I thought that the chip timing lost its impact since there wasn't a timing mat at the start, only the finish. Also, I questioned the accuracy of the distance (was it "about" a 12K or really a 12K?). These two factors made the chip timing seem unreliable as a means of seeing your true pace. That said, I wouldn't have really expected chip timing on a run of this type, so it really was not a big deal to me.
Every distance that I was ever told was inaccurate...was told at one aid station the next would be 2 miles and it was 4.5, was told 4.5 And it was 7. Every aid station (9 of them) this occurred.
Driving to St Regis on Friday to pick up packets because supposedly there would be no packet pick up on Saturday before the 50 mile race - and then there was packet pick up for some people. I have sent an email stating concerns about driving to St Regis repeatedly. I still think that there could have been arrangements for packet pick up in Missoula on Friday - after all, Montana Radio offices are on Reserve St. There should have been more support for the 50 mile participants in the afternoon and early evening as the back of the packers came in. Organizers were packing up water and putting away things before the 50 mile runners were all finished. And the food ran out before 50 milers were all back. Since the number of 50 mile participants was known, an appropriate amount of food should have been set aside for the 50 milers. And the PT should have been scheduled for the 50 milers, not the shorter distances. The t-shirts were boring. There should have been finisher medals for all participants especially the 50 milers.
Don't need so much time between bus ride and start of the run.
Distribution of the age group awards was a bit chaotic but it wasn't critical to the event success.
Didn't like the beer, but others did. The last leg of the running trail in the grass was boarder line dangerous. I didn't fall or trip at all during the whole race, but when I got to the last mowed section of grass I almost rolled my ankle 6 or 7 times, not fun.

<p>Didn't like leaving the trail to go to the aid stations on the other side of the freeway (it interrupted my flow/momentum). Didn't like hearing the freeway noise on the trail (I don't see how you can prevent that short of moving the run off the trail). Hated the little trail that was cut for the last 1/4 mile leading into the park. That was rough, I was sure I was going to stumble/fall. The name "Trail Rail Run" is too generic. It could be a race anywhere in the country. Give it a name that personalizes it, makes it unique.</p>
<p>Didn't know what would be available at the aid stations - ended up carrying much more food with me than I needed.</p>
<p>Didn't have any clue when the awards would be given. A specific time for each awards ceremony needs to be set beforehand.</p>
<p>Despite what I'm going to type here, I want to say I still think the organizers had a GREAT idea to put on this race, and I'm glad I did it. But I didn't really care for the not-quite-trail, not-quite-road surface that the railroad grade provides. It's not a difficult race (flat), but the gravel surface isn't easy to run on for 19 miles. It became monotonous after a while with no elevation changes. While I knew the course followed I-90, I hadn't thought about the fact that there would be a constant hum of traffic, which sort of took away from the lovely scenery. Also, the long measurements of the races were kind of disappointing. This is very, very easily resolved with a simple GPS watch and a bicycle, or even a website like mapmyrun.com. These days there really is no excuse for a poorly measured course. It wasn't such a big deal for the 30k (19 mi vs. 18.6) but since the 10k was really 12k, I heard some complaints. The odd, bumpy, loose-dirt trail I cut through the forest at the end was another negative. I didn't talk to a single person who thought that was a good way to finish.</p>
<p>Crushed rock road surface, expected more fire road or single track dirt type surface</p>
<p>Course was a little too rocky for my tastes. Had blisters from the rocks.</p>
<p>Could not find the community center because of lack of provided directions on the website or Facebook. Did not like some of the aid stations location off the trail. Messed with the flow of the trail run. Did not like the crushed rock surface; was expecting more fire road type surface. Did not like the high cost of the 50K ultra compared to other ultra's I have been a part of. I hope any proceeds went to charity but I could not find anything about that on the website.</p>
<p>Community 'Summerfest' activities too far away, need better coordination, seemed like a completely separate event</p>
<p>Coming off the trail and under/over the highway to go to aid stations. Shook me out of the flow of the run. Seemed extra and unnecessary.</p>
<p>Check-in next to highway Heed drink Lack of shade at drop zones</p>
<p>Being notified only minutes before starting the actual race that the course was longer than we thought. The announcer at the finish line was great when she was there, but she wasn't there for a lot of the finishers.</p>
<p>Awards ceremony was somewhat hidden and out of sight and barely understandable (needs better sound system)</p>
<p>Awards ceremony needs work.</p>
<p>Awards - did not receive as indicated in race info</p>
<p>At the time I didn't like that the mileage was over, but once I was done it didn't matter as much.</p>

At first they wanted everyone to pick up race packets the day before, that was changed so you can pick them up race day morning- it's simply too far or difficult for many people to travel the day before the race- keep it so you can pick up packets in the morning
At aid stations every distance that I was ever given was incorrect..ie... was told next aid station was 2 Miles when it was actually 4.5, was told another time next aid station was 4 when it was 7 miles etc...
1. Unclear directions regarding Saturday morning packet pick-up. Everyone in my party independently thought we were to pick our packets up at the Community Center on Saturday a.m. We could not get to St. Regis after work on Friday in time to pick up the packets then. So, we were at the Community Center before 7:00 a.m. on Saturday, but there was nobody there. And, there were no instructions regarding where we should go instead! It was a bit disconcerting on a morning that was tightly scheduled. 2. The interstate noise --but I realize there is nothing you can do about that!

**Question #31: What suggestions do you have for improvements to The Trail Rail Run?**

Would like to have seen some type of finisher medal for at least the 50K & 50 Miler. It would have been nice to have some type of keepsake to symbolize that you made it through the race...that is a long way to run. Most races over 26.2 present a medal at the end. It was a little anticlimactic when you crossed the finish line.
We need better announcements of the events, both earlier in magazines, websites and newspapers; and on the weekend of the events with street banners and signs for registration, parking and events. This will bring more runners and more volunteers. It will also help defer conflicts with other running events in the region and local events in Mineral County.
The Local Festival should have been closer to the finish line.
The end of the race should of been a different route because the terrain was way too different and treacherous after running 30 miles. Also to pull in more people from out of state into the area maybe provide the participants with discounts at certain lodging places if they stay multiple nights.
Tell people ahead of time that the race is 54K ;-)
T-shirt for registering. Finisher's medal or award. A better top 3, and overall awards. A more useful goodie bag. Keep the race on the trail. Except the final 1.5 miles. I would have preferred to stay on concrete than the final trail.
T-shirt design contests are a cheap, easy way to have a distinctive t-shirt look. Notify 50 milers that the course passes through small towns and runners will have access to places to buy food and drinks so that runners will bring money with them - also this is a way to engage the runners and the small communities. We would have spent more money in St Regis if the packet pickup would have been better established/advertised (the notification about packet picket was too close to the pickup date - that information should have been included with registration information.

<p>Summer Fest should have been in the same location as the end of the race, not across the parking lot  More than one porta potty at the start of the races  All aid stations on the course, running under the freeway and into a town was confusing and unnecessary  Female sizing on t-shirts  Aid stations with prepared cups of water so no waiting to fill up the cups  The last section of new trail into the park was a bit rough and could have easily caused some sprained ankles  The kid race should have been announced by the loud speakers at the race and ended in the same place it started.  BBQ lunch available for purchase for non-race participants</p>
Streamline packet pickup.
Start the shorter runs later so that all the racers finish closer in time
Space the aid stations a bit more evenly next year.
Sorry, guess I put these above in the "did not like" part. :)
Smooth out the forest section at the end. Make sure of your distances
Signage directional arrow to the packet pickup Community Center from the intersection. Huckleberry Shake coupon in race packet
Should have finisher's medals for 50k and 50m as advertised.
See above.
See above.
See above.
see above
Run more parts of the Hiawatha?
Registration at parking. Buses that arrive at the start closer to the start time.
Promote walkers also --my group may have been the only walkers.
Perhaps the route could be modified to use the CC divide trail that runs along the top of the ridge from Taft to St. Regis. I would also like to have more informed people at the aid stations. Most didn't know how many miles until the next aid station but gave us a guess.
Perhaps a few more aid stations, maybe just one more on the 30 k. Smooth out last for 1/2 mile or so.
Perhaps a different .5 to the finish.... or maybe the trail will be more settled next year.
Per race information should suggest all runners carry water on the course. This would be helpful to novice ultra-runners. Future race info could also indicate course is longer than 50K. Most ultra-runners don't really care as long as they are warned ahead of time.
Pack the finish trail.
Overall it was well put together. The communication before the race was great. I can't really think of much that could be improved on.
Not everyone wears a GPS. It would be helpful to provide mileage markers at the aid stations so we know where we are on the course. None of the volunteers I asked knew how many miles were left or what mileage the aide station was situated at. I did not eat or drink anything after the race so cannot comment on that. I would have liked to have a bottle or cup of ice water and did not see any. Huckleberry Shake coupon at packet pickup would have been an appreciated perk. The radio station or organizers did not have to pay for finishers medals and there was no purse prize to the winners (which is a good thing in my opinion as it keeps the crowds at bay). I liked the small venue. Thus I am a little curious what all of our entry fee \$\$ was used for.
Not a one! Awesome job!
None

None
Next year, make sure to publish race distances that are accurate (12K instead of 10K), just to eliminate the starting line surprise. Also, the same day packet pickup was essential for me (and for other 12K runners, I imagine). I drove from Missoula, which is close enough that it doesn't justify an overnight stay for such a short race, but far enough that I couldn't make the trip the night before. If I were not given the option of same day packet pickup I would not register.
New course.
Move to rail sections further away from interstate
Move the finish closer to the live music, kids' games, beer booth, and food concessions
Move awards ceremony to better location
Move awards ceremony to a better visible location. Have an award for canines running it. Thank you for a great day! We will be back next year with the entire family.
More than one kind of beer. It would have been nice if the festival and running event were more combined and not separated by a huge field.
More precise mileage at the aid stations would help runner know how they are doing a bit better.
More bathrooms at the start might help and maybe an "expo" with gels to purchase etc. I always have fun shopping the expo before a race. Overall very satisfied with my experience.
Mile markings and description of the course included in the overall event description
Mile markers on the trail so you know how far you have gone/how far to go. Better signage on the trail in general.
Might consider awarding a medal to all finishers of the 50 mile and 50k events
Measure the courses. Gummy bears instead of Jelly Bellys. Jelly Bellys aren't a grab and go food, a handful tastes awful—they are only palatable to many individually.
Measure the course before hand??
Maybe just better signage, all in all, a great race that ill plan on doing every year.
Maybe a pre-race pasta dinner or a pre-race get together of some type to make it seem like a more cohesive group. I would not recommend sending people to two different locations to pick up shirts and #s...seems like a waste of gas and people resources.
Maybe a porta potty at the parking area so people don't pee in the woods.
Make the activities at the finish area better coordinated. More food available, more vendors, etc..
Make the 30K, exactly 30K and have better food.
Make the 30K start time at 8am.
Make sure it happens again next year!! I'd definitely be back.
Make it clearer we will leave the main course to go to the DeBorgia aid station (and others if that happens on the 50M, 50K course). 30K lead runner had to come back a half mile. I was in third and would have passed it if second place person had not yelled at me. I know we were told to check in to aid stations but did not understand one was all the way off the main trail. A few countdown mile or km markers would be nice.
Listed above in negatives. Keep the after party the same - it was excellent!
Last 1/2 mile of the 'trail' cut into the park was not fun; would have rather just finished the thing out on the pavement into the park.
Know the distance of the race. It was a shock to find out it was further at the start.

Keep your aid stations on the route instead of diverting people off the trail Fruit and lighter snacks at finish line for those not wanting such a heavy meal after the race
Keep up great work
Keep the aid the stations on the trail as much as possible. Signage at the T junction next to the Dominion Trestle was confusing. Periodic mileage markers along the course would be helpful. An awards ceremony or announcement of winners would have been nice. Perhaps this happened but the 50 milers did not get to participate.
Keep it the way it is for now - possible 100 mile option?
Just the mowed area of the trail - the rest of the run was 5 star! Wanted to say thanks and good job to those who put it together and worked. I would also be nice to tie the vendors and music closer to the finish line.
Just get shade a drop zone & asphalt near end
Just continue the finish on the road to a regular entrance into the park. Maybe cordon off the finish / lunch area for racers. While I was eating lunch (which was very good!), I kept getting beamed in the head by little Frisbees that locals were throwing 10 feet away. (Locals are GREAT! Not complaining about locals per se —they were fabulous hosts.) I'm thinking maybe some signage or ropes separating the post-race area a little would help, both so that runners know where to go, and so others playing in the park aren't running thru the lunch area or walking up trying to order a beer at the Bayern table because it's not clear that it's meant for race participants. The guy pouring beer kept having to explain that to folks. It would be great if somehow fewer cobbles were put down at least in a narrow area to allow for a path that would accommodate runners and bicycles.
It was a very positive experience. Great job guys!
It is nice when they have sex specific shirt sizes so the fits are better for women.
Include all the local activities (vendor booths, food, music) at the finish line. They were too far away from each other so enjoy them both, you had to choose one or the other.
Improve the last stretch of the run, and make sure that the actual distances of the run are what they are stated.
Improve the last portion of the trail into the park to be a bit more smooth
Improve the above mentioned area of the trail
If permits allow...need more participants...and a little more at the finish line to keep the celebration going.
I would love to see the run stay on the trail.
I would like to see a few mile markers along the course. At least at aid stations. And getting closer to finish.
I would have liked more protein and fat at aid station. I think different foods at different aid stations would have been fun but I am not a serious runner.
I was really satisfied.
I usually wear a Women's M shirt and all the shirts were too big for me. I had to give mine to my husband. A women's cut shirt would be great. Also, the one aid station/check point on the other side of the interstate was confusing....maybe written directions. It was hard to tell from your map exactly where you would go.
I thought it went well. A good run for a beginning 50-miler: good surface, easy hills

I loved the amount of runners in this year's event. I think that you will see this event grow, by leaps and bounds in the coming years, hope it does not get too large.
I know it was the first year so things were coming together as it got closer to the event and it was understandable that things changed. However when some info was posted in the blog, some on the runner info page, and some in emails it was hard to look back and find needed info. You knew you read it somewhere, just had to find it again. It would be easier to have one place to look for that info, maybe with an email alerting to changes but also have the changes posted on the info page?? We picked up our race bag on Friday night since it was suggested to try and not wait until Saturday morning, only to find out before the race that we had no bib/timing chip. We biked to the race so had to ride down to the store, back to the parking, and then walk to the store again. Not a huge deal but we were cutting it a little close for time since we didn't think we had to worry about packet pick-up that morning. These are just small issues that I know come with a brand new event. Overall I would say the race was one of my all-time favorites and I will be back next year for sure!
I completely understand why the course was long this year, but I do hope that will be fixed for future years!
Grade the entire trail route for a smoother surface. Smooth and broaden the final path across the US Forest Service land to allow maintaining a pace without watching your feet at each step.
Get the races correctly specified from a distance perspective and run them that way.
Get distances correct
Gel at the aid stations was great but caffeinated gel would really have helped. Knowing for sure what was at each aid station beforehand is very important. If at all possible, publishing this info early on would help us to plan what we have to carry or have in our drop bags. I think the mileages were not completely accurate. I was planning on the aid stations being closer to 5 miles apart and actually got dehydrated a couple times because they were not. If the volunteers knew for sure what the distance was of their station, and the distance to the next one, that would help a bunch. At the 25 mile mark I spoke to a woman who was going to drop out. She was just told by the aid station that she was only 19 miles into the 50 mile run. I assured her that we were half way so she continued on and ended up coming in 2nd or 3rd female. Knowing the mileages is so important! There were no signs at the start of the 50 miler. We drove around for a while looking for something to tell us we were in the right place. Again, AWESOMELY done event, these are suggestions and even if nothing changes, I'm still looking forward to next year! Thank you thank you thank you for putting this on! :)
Flatten that last bit of trail if possible. Include on the website and notifications that there will be a shuttle from the parking lot to the shuttle for the start, this way we can plan accordingly (I almost missed my race because the parking lot shuttle waited for 15-20 minutes). Get the race information out to registered participants about a week before the race, not a few days.
Finisher "trophies" of some sort would have been nice. I have been to trail races where upon actually finishing (in addition to the registration T-shirt) a small token was given out only to finishers. Examples include: trail socks, run caps and beanies, bumper stickers that say "I finished a ___ trail race", additional T-shirts, and even custom "metals" of something representing the area (eg stones). In the end, I finished and enjoyed the race regardless. I think it would be nice if the 50 milers would have started an hour earlier.
Figure out millage better
Do it again :)
Count-down mile markers would be good, telling you how far it is to the finish. At least for the "10k"

Change the last mile of the trail to a more steady ground.
Change the last part of the trail and get more vendors involved for an end of the race expo.
Change the finish line, so that you don't have to run through that horrible trail at the end. Keep all the aid stations on the trail. Having to come off the trail, go under the interstate, check in, and back to the trail was a bit odd. Just have the aid stations on the trail. Overall it was a fantastic event! The food at the end was a real treat!
Bring the St Regis vendors closer, just walked over there and not much was happening. If they were closer it may have drawn more folks.
Bike/hike/run the course with a GPS watch beforehand so you have the real numbers ready. For a race like the 10... I mean 12K, it's not as big a deal, but when you have people running half marathon to 50 miles, people really rely on the aid stations and organizers to give them the right information.
Better signage when we had to go off the trail. Loved the aid stations about three to four miles apart, the ones that were a bit more, I ran out of water... But I could just bring bigger water bottles. :)
Better location of aid stations, get the distance right.
better awards and award ceremony
Be honest about the length of the run.
As we are from Lolo, we didn't pick up packets until morning of it and it was not near the insane, crazy or hectic but it was anticipated to be by the blog so we arrived at least an hour before we needed to...we didn't know at all about the food, etc at finish line prior to the run...it was a nice surprise...had planned to eat at Quinn's where we soaked for hours after run. So having food provided was awesome & the food WAS AWESOME & much appreciated! looking fwd to next year ;) judi dewaters #75
As above. Overall it was very well run and we had a great day!!
Another distance... 10-13 miles?
Aid stations on the course would make for more accurate overall mileage.
aid station mileage needs to be added to the course map, it was very difficult to tell how far you had run (or how much further you had to go)
Advertise the 50K as a 55K (it came up as 54K on my watch). I wasn't surprised or upset with the bonus miles since it was the 1st year, but I did hear lots of people comment on it. I didn't understand the reason the aid stations had to go into those little communities. Take those away and you'll come in closer to the 50K distance. (Of course you'll need to adjust the 50 mile). Some additional food options at aid stations. Boiled potatoes w/ salt, peanut M&M's.
Accurate measurement of the course prior to the race
Accurate maps! Otherwise, great. The volunteers were great, the trail is fun and it was a good day.
A pre-race dinner/picnic Friday night so the runners could have the opportunity to get acquainted. Probably not important for local runners bwho just drive up early race morning, or for 10K runners, but as an ultra runner who travels to lots of races, getting to know my fellow runners and socialize a bit is an important part of the experience. It's the difference between a "race" where you just show, run and go home, and an "event" like the White River 50 or Squaw Peak 50 or the better 100s such as Leadville and Western States. Post-race picnics don't work very well in Ultras since the runners are too spread out by the time they finish.
A few tweaks to the finish line area and this will be perfect. It was a great run and a wonderful atmosphere!
30 k should be billed as a perfect Missoula marathon long training run .

1. Staff the packet pick-up until 8:00 or 9:00 p.m. the night before so that people coming over after work on Friday evening from Missoula, Butte, Bozeman, or Helena can pick up their packets in advance of Saturday morning. 2. Make sure the aide stations have blister care products (mole skin, blister bandages, etc.).