



Origins of Hardrock

In the fall of 1991, Gordon Hardman (Boulder & Lake City, CO) placed a notice in Ultrarunning Magazine that in the summer of 1992 there would be a 100-mile run in the San Juan Mountains of southwestern Colorado.

John Cappis (Telluride, CO & Los Alamos, NM) contacted Gordon and asked what his thoughts were for a course.

The general approach was to bring the route as close as possible to Silverton, Lake City, Ouray, and Telluride, the four major mining towns of the San Juan district.

The original thought was to change the start/finish between towns each year to add variety to the run. Cappis volunteered to try and lay out a course, keeping in mind the idea of connecting the towns while at the same time selecting routes that would be on trails as much as possible.

A basic principle was that the course make use of the old mining trails as much as possible. This event was to be not only a physical and psychological challenge to the entrants, but also a celebration of the miners that made that area what it had become. It was envisioned as a "Post Graduate" run. Entry was limited to those who had finished several other certified 100 mile runs and/or were considered, in the opinion of the run management, capable of finishing what was meant to be the most mountainous trail run in the United States.

By January of 1992 a route developed entirely from map studies was available. Charlie Thorn (Los Alamos, NM) then became active in the process and by April the necessary government permits were obtained.

In June, Charlie, Rick Trujillo and Cappis spent many days making sure the chosen routes were feasible and making field adjustments, including addition of the Dives Little Giant section only one week before the run. The course was run in the clockwise direction with a nominal length of 98.8 miles and a cumulative vertical gain of 29684 feet. Start and finish was in the Silverton Memorial Park with a large tent serving as run headquarters.



Kroger's Canteen, 1993 (PC: Blake Wood)

The major points on the first course were

- Shrine Road
- Highway 550
- South Mineral Creek Rd
- Ice Lake
- Island Lake
- Grant Swamp Pass
- Chapman Gulch
- Oscar's Pass
- Wasatch Basin
- Telluride Elks Park
- Mendota Pass
- Virginius Pass
- Governor Basin
- Ouray Box Canyon Park
- Uncompahgre River Dam
- Engineer Pass
- Grouse Gulch
- American-Grouse Pass
- Handies Peak
- Grizzly Gulch
- Burrows Park
- Cinnamon Pass Road
- Sherman
- Cataract Lake
- Main fork of Pole Creek
- West fork of Pole Creek
- Maggie Gulch at Stamp Mill
- Buffalo Boy Ridge south approach
- Rocky Gulch
- Stony Pass Road
- Cunningham Gulch
- Dives Little Giant
- Arrastra Gulch
- State Route 110

After this first year, it was decided to keep the start/finish permanently in Silverton, reversing directions every running of the event.