

# Hardrock 100 Endurance Run

## 2021 Course Description- CCW Direction

Welcome to the 26th edition of the Hardrock 100 Endurance Run.

This course description is intended to be used as a general orientation and guide to the Hardrock course for runners, pacers and crew. It includes brief descriptions of routes, major drainages, landmark peaks, climbs, descents and aid stations. Occasional alerts and warnings (!) will be provided. **It is not intended to be used as a navigation tool.**

We endeavor to have a well marked course and to provide an accurate GPX file for those that wish to download it to their smartphone. But keep in mind that this is a huge, complex course. Unexpected things can and will happen. Marmots devour course markers and pull them into their dens. Elk trample them into the mud. Markers have been vandalized, stolen and maliciously relocated. Smartphones glitch and batteries die.

Therefore, as part of a *graduate level run*, it is your responsibility to obtain and study whatever maps or other resources you deem appropriate for your experience level to safely navigate the course if markers or electronic devices fail.

*\* A note on measuring distances; there can be significant deviation between GPX files, GPS watches, guidebooks and maps. Consider the mile measurements provided herein to be close but not exact and they may not match other devices and sources.*

**Environment** Environmental preservation is one of Hardrock's most important values. Practice *Leave No Trace* guidelines. Drop no trash and if you see trash, please pick it up. Never cut switchbacks. Solid human waste should be well away from trails, buried >5 inches deep and at least 100 feet from the nearest water source.

**Hazards** There are many hazards on the Hardrock course! Including but not limited to; falls on snow, scree, talus and cliffs, fast moving water, wildlife encounters, rock fall, altitude sickness, lightning, cold and heat.

While the vast majority of runners complete the course without incident there have been many close calls and occasional injuries sustained from all of the above during the previous 25 editions of Hardrock.

Best of luck! We look forward to seeing you in Silverton.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

### **Silverton Start- Mile 0- 9318 ft.**

From the Silverton School gym, run north and east out of town, past the Kendall Mountain Ski Area and proceed NE on the Lackawanna Trail. Cross Arrastra Creek and begin the first major climb of the race on jeep roads. Look (!) for markers at road intersections at the beginning of the climb. At mile 6 look (!) for a single track trail on the left that leaves the road and ascends towards the pass.

### **Climb #1-Dives Little Giant Pass -Mile 7- 13,000 ft.**

Descend a steep miners trail into Cunningham Gulch. Cross Cunningham Creek and enter the aid station.

### **Cunningham Gulch Aid Station- Mile 9.2 - 10,380 ft.**

Crew and drop bags allowed. Please note (!) that the Cunningham Gulch road can be very congested and is heavily traveled by those not associated with Hardrock. This has led to user conflict in the past. Consider drop bags in lieu of crew. If crew is necessary, limit is one vehicle per runner. Consider carpooling with other crews.

Proceed south on the Cunningham Gulch road .2 mile, look (!) for a single track trail on the left and begin climbing to Green Mountain. Note that there can be large herds of sheep grazing in Green Mountain Basin. Guard dogs may be present and aggressive. Do your best to go well around the sheep and the dogs.

**Climb #2- Green Mountain / Stony Pass Ridge- Mile 12.2- 12,980 ft.**

Descend and then traverse towards Stony Pass (12,580 ft.) and the Stony Pass Road. The course crosses the road about 100 meters to the south (runner's right) of the pass. Begin climbing again, then traversing with Canby Mountain on the right.

**Climb #3- Buffalo Boy Ridge - Mile 13.7- 13,214 ft.**

Begin the descent into Maggie Gulch. Note that the location of the initial drop off the ridge will vary from year to year depending on snow and cornice conditions. Follow faint trails or off-trail markers to the aid station.

**Maggie Gulch Aid Station - Mile 15.3 - 11,840 ft.**

No crew. No drop bags. The aid station is located at the end of a rough, narrow 4WD road with steep drops. Crews (!) do not attempt to visit this aid station.

Leave the aid station and begin climbing and traversing NE towards the Continental Divide.

**Climb #4 - Maggie / Pole Pass- Mile 16.3 - 12,530 ft.**

Cross the Continental Divide Trail (CDT) and descend SE into the West Fork of Pole Creek. Do not (!) go north or south on the CDT. You are now on the east side of the Continental Divide. Between here and the next aid station are huge willow stands and numerous wetlands. The Pole Creek elk are notorious for trampling course markers in this area. Slow down (!) and carefully navigate this section.

**Pole Creek Aid Station- Mile 19.6- 11,460 ft.**

No Crew. No drop bags. This is a backcountry aid station. All supplies are hiked or horse packed in.

Depart the aid station, cross the North Fork of Pole Creek and begin ascending the Main Fork of Pole Creek NNE towards the Continental Divide. This area contains complex terrain with lots of side drainages. Many runners have gotten off-course here. Slow down (!) and carefully navigate this section.

### **Climb #5- Cataract Pole Pass- Mile 23.5- 12,200 ft.**

Cross the CDT again. Do not (!) go east or west on the CDT. You are now back on the west side of the Continental Divide. You may see Sunshine Peak (14,001 ft.) looming large to the north. Proceed mostly north on the Cataract Gulch Trail through low angle terrain, skirting Cataract Lake and multiple tarns. The next 1-2 miles have numerous wetlands and willows. Slow down (!) and carefully navigate this section. As the terrain steepens and narrows, the trail becomes more distinct and easier to follow. Cross Cottonwood Creek and enter the aid station

### **Sherman Aid Station- Mile 28.7- 9640 ft.**

Crews and drop bags allowed. Please note (!) that crew driving times from Silverton are multiple hours round trip on either a rugged 4WD route over Cinnamon Pass or on pavement, north or south via Lake City. Consider the net benefit of crewing vs. drop bags and the assistance of the awesome staff at Sherman aid station.

Depart the aid station east on the county road. Run approximately .5 mile, cross the bridge over the East Fork of the Gunnison River. Around 40 yards past the bridge, look (!) for a faint trail on the left ascending into the trees. Follow this for .25 mile up to the Cinnamon Pass Road. (This .25 mile section is on private land. Do not leave the trail). Take a left on the Cinnamon Pass Road (aka Shelf Road) heading NW. There will be traffic.

### **Burrows Park Aid Station- Mile 32.5- 10,410 ft.**

No Crew. No drop bags. Note to crew (!), do not follow or assist your runner on the Cinnamon Pass Road or attempt to crew at Burrows Park.

Leaving the aid station, cross the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River and begin climbing the Grizzly Gulch / Handies Peak Trail. This is a distinct, heavily traveled trail. Hit timberline at around 11,800 ft. At around 12,500 ft. start working up the rocky ridge towards the summit of Handies Peak.

### **Climb #6- Handies Peak- Mile 36.8- 14,048 ft.**

High point of the Hardrock 100. Breathe deep and descend south off the peak. After passing near Sloan Lake, the trail turns west. Proceed west and look (!) for a trail intersection. Leave the main climbers trail, cross the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River (again) and get on the American Basin / Grouse Gulch Trail traveling WNW. Traverse American Basin. There will likely be some snow here, even on dry years. Ascend to the next pass.

### **Climb #7- American Grouse Pass- Mile 39.6- 13,020 ft.**

Cross the high saddle with some faint trails going off in various directions. Slow down (!) and carefully navigate through this short section. Get on the Grouse Gulch Trail that soon becomes distinct and easy to follow. Descend continuously to the next aid.

### **Grouse Gulch Aid Station- Mile 42.1- 10,710 ft.**

Crews and drop bags allowed. Pacers may start here. Crew alert (!)- the last 3 miles of the drive (past Eureka) to Grouse Gulch from Silverton is on a rough, high clearance / 4WD road. This road section is congested, narrow and it can be difficult to pass other vehicles. The parking at the aid station is very limited. Please limit crew/ family/ friends to 1 vehicle (!) and consider carpooling with other crews.

Depart the aid station NNW on the Engineer Pass Road, passing through the headwaters the Animas River. This section is part of the Alpine Loop, a busy OHV route. Depending on time of day, there could be lots of traffic. Ascend 5.1 miles towards Engineer Pass, taking care not to turn off onto numerous side roads. Before getting to the true summit of Engineer Pass, look (!) for a short spur road to the left (west). This is the top of the climb. Do not (!) go to Engineer Pass.

### **Climb #8- Oh Point- Mile 47.2- 12,910 ft.**

Drop off of Oh Point steeply, then more moderately and follow markers through faint and intersecting trails. Slow down (!) and carefully navigate this section all the way to the aid station.

### **Engineer Aid Station- Mile 48.6- 11,800 ft.**

No crew. No drop bags. This is a backcountry aid station. All supplies are packed in.

Depart the aid station NW on the Bear Creek Trail. The trail is initially faint but quickly becomes easier to follow. Trail alert (!)- the Bear Creek Trail soon enters a steep, narrow gorge. While the trail is generally good (sans rockslides), there are potential hazards including rock fall, huge vertical drops off the left side of the trail and potentially difficult stream crossings in the event of heavy rain. Use caution all the way to the highway. And lean to the right. Hit the Highway 550 tunnel at mile 53.8. From here, all the way to the Ouray aid station at the north end of town, slow down (!) and navigate carefully. Follow the course markers through a complex route of trails, dirt roads and paved roads.

### **Ouray Aid Station- Mile 56.6- 7680 ft.**

Crew and drop bags allowed. Low point of the Hardrock 100.

Depart the aid station via a different route than you entered. Head west over a footbridge, then go south. Again, slow down (!) and navigate carefully while departing Ouray on paved roads, dirt roads and trails. Hit the Camp Bird Road, turn right and start ascending. At the Camp Bird mine, stay right (!) heading towards Yankee Boy Basin. Follow markers towards Governors Basin and enter the aid station.

### **Governor Basin Aid Station- Mile 64.5- 10,780 ft.**

No crew. No drop bags. Crews (!) do not follow or assist your runner on the Camp Bird Road.

Depart the aid station SW, cross Sneffels Creek and begin a complex route of off-trail, trails and mining roads. Slow down (!) and navigate carefully. Approaching Virginius Pass, there will be 3 steps of high and moderate angle terrain. The final steep step to the pass will usually have snow, even in dry years. There may be a fixed line here for safety. Use caution (!), as falls here are possible and be mindful of rock fall from above and dropping rocks on runners below.

**Climb #9- Virginius Pass &  
Kroger's Canteen Aid Station- Mile 67.7- 13,100 ft.**

No crew. No drop bags. Backcountry aid station. All supplies are packed in. Enter the most spectacular (and improbable) aid station in ultra running. Enjoy the hospitality briefly as there is very limited space. Exit via a steep, loose trail SW using caution (!) to stay on the trail which soon traverses to the right. Runners have gotten off-course here and headed straight down. Cross Mendota Ridge, enter Liberty Bell Basin, get on the Cornet Creek Trail and run into Telluride. Follow course markers on paved streets through Telluride to the aid station at Town Park.

**Telluride Aid Station- Mile 72.7- 8750 ft.**

Crew and drop bags allowed.

Exit the aid station SSW, cross a field and climb a short hill to the Bear Creek Trail (a road closed to motorized vehicles). Take a left and ascend. At mile 75 look (!) for the Wasatch Trail on the right. Approaching the Wasatch Saddle, slow down (!) and navigate carefully through intersections with system trails and faint social trails. Cross the saddle into Bridal Veil Basin, then turn south towards the pass.

**Climb #10- Oscar's Pass- Mile 79.2- 13,140 ft.**

Descend south off of the pass on a steep rocky trail into the trees and meet the Ophir Pass Road. Take a right on the road, heading downhill for about .25 mile and look(!) for a left turn. Follow old road bed / trail about .3 mile to the aid station.

### **Chapman Gulch Aid Station- Mile 82.4- 10,190 ft.**

Crew and drop bags allowed. Crew alert (!)- The Ophir Pass Road is congested and heavily traveled with potential for user conflict. Crews must park at a designated site on the east side of the Ophir township and hike approximately 2 miles to the intersection of the Ophir Road and the trail to the aid station. Then hike .3 mile into the aid station. Please consider drop bags and the excellent staff at Chapman in lieu of crewing.

Exit south out of the aid station and ascend Swamp Canyon with South Lookout Peak on the left and US Grant Peak on the right. Climb above timberline and into the top of the drainage. There is a steep couloir going up the last few hundred vertical feet to the pass. Pick the most appealing route up the scree and begin climbing. Caution (!)- There is potential for injuries from rockfall in the couloir. Be mindful of runners and pacers above and below.

### **Climb #11- Grant Swamp Pass- Mile 85.6- 12,920 ft.**

At the top of the couloir take a right turn, traversing the ridge for about 100 yards. Check out the Joel Zucker Memorial shortly before descending steeply into Island Lake Basin. Alert (!)- soon after entering the basin the course enters an area closed to the public due to the Ice Fire that burned in October 2020. The Hardrock has special permission to access the closure for runners and pacers only and only during the race. Please stay strictly on the trail until the intersection with the Ice Lakes trail. Take a left on the Ice Lakes trail, run .25 mile downhill and look (!) for the Kamm Traverse trail on the right. Descend steeply a short distance to the creek. Caution (!)- this creek crossing can be tricky with high flows. There may be a log bridge across the creek but it's often unstable. Runners have fallen into swift water here. Climb out of the creek, wrapping around to a south heading towards the aid station.

### **KT Aid Station- Mile 89- 10,630 ft.**

No crew. No drop bags. Pacer alert (!)- due to the Ice Fire closure pacer add/ drop will not be allowed at KT this year via walk-in as it would require crossing the closed area.



Depart the aid station and cross the South Mineral Road. Look (!) for a descent on a faint trail to the crossing of South Mineral Creek. Begin the ascent of the Porcupine drainage, crossing through high basins and timberline to a prominent saddle.

**Climb #12- Porcupine Cataract Pass- Mile 91.9- 12,230 ft.**

Drop into and traverse Cataract Basin to its east end. Slow down (!) and navigate carefully though here as the trail can be faint and vegetation can obscure the route. Begin the final climb.

**Climb #13- Cataract Putnam Pass- Mile 93.3- 12,600 ft.**

Descend steeply to a saddle between Putnam Basin and Lime Creek. Look (!) for markers indicating a left (north) turn into Putnam Basin. Run to the final aid station.

**Putnam Basin Aid Station- Mile 94.9- 11,400 ft.**

No Crew. No drop bags. This is a backcountry aid station. All supplies are packed in.

Depart the aid station and head downstream on the Bear Creek Trail. Cross numerous talus slopes and continue descending into the trees. Cross Mineral Creek with the assistance of a fixed rope. Caution (!)- this is the biggest water crossing on the course. During high snow run-off years and following heavy rain, this can be a difficult crossing. Immediately beyond the creek is Highway 550. Turn left and run the shoulder of the highway around 50 yards upstream. Caution (!) - look both ways before crossing the road. It is often dark and runners are fatigued. (Imagine that). Look (!) for markers on the east side of the highway. Ascend a short, steep slope to the Rainbow Trail. Run SE on the flat-rolling trail until it meets the Shrine Road. Turn left on the Shrine Road and climb gently until looking down on the center of Silverton. Look (!) for a marker on the right near the top of the climb and descend through a sloping field into town. Follow markers 3 blocks on town streets to the finish.

**Silverton Finish- Mile 100.5- 9310 ft.**

**Stop! Kiss the Hardrock!**

