

2021 Leaf Mountain Foot Race

At Glacial Lakes State Park

New in 2021!

The big, new, very obvious difference in 2021 is the evening start. Those of us who call the area home and frequent the park, know 2 things. First, the prairie loop at sunset is spectacular. If you've looked at our Facebook page, you know we are unapologetically obsessed with the sunset over Kettle Lake. We must share that with you. You will thank us later, I promise. Second, have you ever looked at the stars from the top of the highest point in the park? Equally spectacular. Take a moment up top to turn off your headlamp, and gaze at the stars above, shining down on the vast prairie and lakes below. Oh, and on that note - **BRING A HEADLAMP!!!** I will say it again, so everyone hears it, **you will need a headlamp** to complete the 2021 Leaf Mountain Footrace. Ok, so now you know the real reasons for the evening start. The rest, just running around in the woods after dark, in search of a book shimmering in the tree, well, that's just gravy. You're starting to get excited, I know it. You can barely wait. Hold on just one minute, we do have to talk about the rest of the details and logistics that may not be quite as exciting, so please continue on and read this email in its entirety.

Covid Updates

Yeah, I hate the word as much as you guys, but the reality is, it's a reality. The state and park has granted us permission to hold the event, and you've all, no doubt, assessed the risk, and made the decision to sign up. Now let's all do our parts to ensure a safe event for everyone. What does that mean? First and foremost - if you are sick PLEASE STAY HOME. If you're registered and scared of losing your registration fee, fear not, we will work with you in any way, shape or form. I'd rather refund everyone's money than to have one person show up sick on race day. Second, just be aware of your surroundings and practice good sanitation. Especially when it comes to food, and aid stations. We will have hand sanitizer there, so please use it prior to grabbing food, etc. Please know, we thought long and hard about the nature of this event, as it pertains to Covid. One thing we have going for us is it's a small event, held entirely outdoors. One thing we have going against us is, we are all to be finding and tearing pages out of books. We considered how we might mitigate that, but it's impossible to do the event justice without the books. There will be a bottle of hand sanitizer at each book location so if you wish to ensure you're properly sanitized, you can grab a squirt after you tear your page out. Again, we defer to you guys to take care of yourselves and make the best decisions for you, but with these simple suggested practices, we believe we can have a safe and fun event. Now onto the rest of the logistics.

Race Day Parking

Race HQ/check-in, along with the start and finish line (for all loops) will be in the GROUP CAMP. All parking will be in the Group Camp as well. From the park entrance, keep going past the beach and campground roads and past the turn to Horse Camp, all the way down the hill to Group Camp. There will be volunteers organizing parking once you arrive. Note - You are welcome to camp in Group Camp on Saturday night following the race. We have the entire Group Camp reserved. We think this could be really fun to finish your race, grab some hot food, and hang out around the bonfire with your fellow runners before retreating to your campsite to sleep. Showers and bathroom facilities are available at the beach parking lot (a short drive or hike from Group Camp) and vault toilets are also available in Group Camp. If you do plan to set up camp and stay overnight with us on Saturday night, please plan to check in and set up camp between 2-5 pm.

Reminder that all vehicles in the park are required to have a State Park permit. They can be obtained at any State Park office as an Annual pass (\$35) or Daily pass (\$7).

Race Day Schedule

Check-in time will be on Saturday afternoon, October 2, 2021, between 4:30 PM and 5:45 PM at the Group Camp shelter. All runners are required to check-in and requested to bring a printed picture of themselves with any Minnesota State Park sign, a nod to Laz and the Barkleys, but we don't want your white shirts or socks (if you have no idea what we're talking about here, I am sorry).

You will be given a race bib and a course map at the time of check-in. There will be a master/legend map which will include the race course(s) and information about the various checkpoints that will be required to ensure you complete each loop. The earlier you check-in and get your map, the more time you have to study the master/legend map and make notes and markings on your course map for reference.

Between 5:45 and 6:00 PM we will blow the horn once to announce a pre-race briefing and gather all runners around for final instructions. At the end of the meeting we will announce the official start time. Race start time could be anywhere between 6:00 PM - 6:36 PM, be ready, it will be anybody's guess.

The race course and finish line area will be officially closed at 11 PM. Runner's should have completed their second loop and out on the third and final loop by 9:30 PM if they intend to do the full 3 loops.

Rules & Race Logistics

If you haven't watched the Barkley Marathons documentary, we highly recommend you do so. It's that race that inspired our vision to create something unique in our own backyard. We wanted something other than a garden variety, weekend 5k. Something unique. Something fun. Something that got you out in the park and forced you to keep your head up and look around. Thus, Leaf Mountain was born. As we like to say, inspired by our obsession with the Barkley's and our love for the state parks. So, call it a trail race, call it a scavenger hunt, or call it a pseudo orienteering/map reading adventure. The truth is, it's a little bit of all the above.

All runners will be given an unmarked park map, a race bib and a zip lock bag at check-in. Runners are then responsible to make their way to the large, marked, legend/map which will have information about the course and the checkpoints. They can use pens/markers provided there to highlight and mark the course on their own map for reference. The bib number assigned will represent the page number of a book at each checkpoint. Runners must make their way around the course and collect the book page with the corresponding number of their race bib. For example, a runner with race bib number 31 would take page number 31 from the book located at each checkpoint. The zip lock bags can be used to stuff pages in and keep them safe and dry.

Upon completing that first loop and returning to Group Camp, runners must check-in at the desk with race officials. At this point the runner must declare if they are intending to be done or to continue on to the second loop. If a runner declares their intent to be done, their time will be recorded, and they will be listed as official finishers of 1 loop (AKA "the fun run"). If a runner declares their intent to continue on to the second loop, the runner can refuel if they wish and then proceed on to the second loop. The second loop is a completely different trail section that does not traverse the same area of the park as the first loop at all. All the same rules of the first loop would then apply to the second loop with regards to making your way through the course and collecting book pages that correspond to your bib number.

Upon completing that second loop and returning to Group Camp, runners must again check-in at the desk with race officials. At this point, once again, the runner must declare if they are intending to be done or to continue on to the third and final loop. If a runner declares their intent to be done here, their time will be recorded, and they will be listed as official finishers of 2 loops (AKA "the double"). **If a runner declares their intent to continue on to the third and final loop, the runner will be in for yet another new and fun surprise, to be announced at the pre-race meeting, so stay tuned for this. Bet you can't guess what it is! ;)**

Each of the 2 independent loops will be measured to be the exact same distance as each other (approximately 6-6.5 miles).

Checking in with the race officials at the desk is on a first come, first served basis. There may be multiple people attempting to check-in and exchange bibs at the same time, and race officials will work as quickly as possible to get them back on the race course, but if you're racing and trying to be as fast as possible, remember to speed into group camp and get to that race officials' desk to make your declaration.

Gathering book pages at the course checkpoints is on a first come, first served basis. There may be multiple people attempting to find and remove their book page at a single checkpoint, especially early in the race. Please exercise patience and goodwill toward your fellow runners. We want a good, old-fashioned foot race, but not at the expense of being rude or malicious when positioning yourself at the checkpoints. This is supposed to be fun.

What to Expect

This is an old-school, classic, foot race. No rock bands. No neon lights. No color bubbles. Just you and many of your closest friends racing the hills of Glacial Lakes State Park. You might find an occasional bald eagle or white tail deer cheering section, but that's about it for frills.

Trails at Glacial Lakes State Park are a mix of hard packed single track and mowed prairie grass. By most estimations, they would not be considered overly technical in nature at all. That said, if you're used to road running and new to trails, well, it's trails. There're rocks, roots, prairie potholes and uneven footing in sections. Caution in foot placement is always key on the trails. Trail shoes are recommended but are certainly not required.

Please, please, please be aware that this should be largely considered a "self-supported" event. We will have a water only stop at approximately the half-way point of each loop (so about every 3-3.5 miles). If you're not a seasoned trail runner, you may not know that miles on the trails almost always take longer than you're used to on the roads, and 3 or 4 miles can take up to an hour. That's a long time to be without fluids, especially if it's warm. As such, we do recommend you carry a handheld water bottle or wear a hydration vest. Please also plan to carry your own fuel/nutrition if you'll need something other than just water. At the end of each loop you'll be back at Group Camp and have access to your vehicle where you can refuel before heading out on any additional loops. We will also have a tarp by the check in desk for drop bags to quickly refuel.

You may get lost. That's part of the adventure. You may second guess if you took a wrong turn and ended up in the wrong spot. That's part of the adventure. You may get to book 3 and realize you missed book 2. You may have to backtrack to find where you went wrong and collect your page from book 2. That's part of the adventure. The trail is not marked. That's part of the adventure. All that said, rest assured, this will not be off-trail orienteering by any means! There may be areas of unfamiliarity that will cause you to pause, look at your map, and double check to make sure you're on the right trail, and that's great. That is what we are hoping for. The maps are basic, and for the most part, very easy to read. If you take the time at check-in to mark your course from the provided reference legend/map, you'll likely be just fine. Whatever happens out there, just remember, it's all part of the adventure.

Awards

All finishers of any of the 3 distances will receive a handmade, laser engraved finisher medal -wood as it were! We think these are well worth the effort and we hope you'll love them.

The Men's and Women's overall champion (first to complete all 3 loops) will win a custom engraved plaque. If no one completes the 3 loops, the first person to complete 2 loops would then be considered the 2021 Leaf Mountain Champion and would receive the plaque (Men's and Women's).

Spectators

To minimize congestion, we ask that if all possible, spectators consider carpooling with their runners. Also know, there will be very minimal access to actually see the runners out on the trail other than at the Group Camp where they will return between loops. If you plan to come out and cheer on your runners, your best bet is to bring a chair and get comfortable at Camp!

Please familiarize yourself with the full details of the event from the website:

<https://leafmountainfootrace.wix.com/race/the-race>