

### MAKE THE JUMP

by Mark McKnight

Crisp air and Tennessee dirt-packed trails welcomed more than 600 determined trail runners the morning of October 3, 2009, for the ninth annual Rock/Creek StumpJump 50-km and 11-miler. A strong local field competed against runners from 20 states around the Union.

The course starts out on road, sure, but that is short-lived. In less than half a mile, runners enter a wooded, multi-use trail in the dense hardwood forest typical of southeastern Tennessee. Gums, poplars, various oaks and maples, sourwoods, and myriad other trees create a sense of isolation and enclosure unique to the area. The trail winds around Signal Mountain High School/Middle School, our hosts for the start/finish line. Eleven-mile runners start with the 50-km although they're divided by a barrier and split off to separate courses. The first three miles contain a climb and then begin to drop into a river gorge. There are usually big puddles to circumnavigate as well as a few small creek crossings. After about three miles, the trail becomes single-track at the striking rock formation named Mushroom Rock and begins a half-mile drop. There's a short section along an exposed cliff edge and the trail bottoms out in a rhododendron grove.

A long, and for some quite scary, swing bridge crosses a lovely creek with some impressive rock cliffs to the east. Runners then climb out of the gorge and run a relatively flat section before dropping into Suck Creek Canyon. Runners pass through an aid station, cross a paved road and climb stairs back onto single-track. This section of trail hugs the edge of the bluff as it climbs out of the canyon and soon gives way to sweeping views of the Tennessee River gorge. The trail is slightly rolling and wonderfully runnable with a few rocky sections at creek crossings. As the trail traverses the edge of the bluff, runners pass between boulders and along exposed cliff lines before reaching the Indian Rock House aid station at the base of an extremely large, exposed cliff line. Here the co-owner of Rock/Creek, Dawson Wheeler, runs a backcountry aid station and generally drags along several sales reps from the outdoor industry. Runners see this unique rock formation twice, at approximately 10.5 miles and again at about 20.5.

The trail continues on along the bluff edge, moving inland at a few points, and then back out on the bluff edge to Snoopers Rock aid station, an exposed rock platform jutting out into the Tennessee River Gorge. The view is worth a few minutes rest, as the river flows in from the northeast and continues on to the west. Observant runners might glimpse the occasional bald eagle as well as the more prevalent osprey.

The gorge is densely wooded and in early October, the hardwoods are just beginning to turn. Out of the aid station, runners continue on single track, crossing a dirt road and then descending to cross a few small drainages before the rhododendron and hemlock groves and a creek crossing. After the creek, runners work themselves around the bluff to the other side of the gorge with views of the river to the west.

The woods are less dense on this side and there are many stands of mountain laurel. This single-track section is more rolling than the other side and runners cross several small creeks, all shaded by hemlock and rhododendron. There are a few climbs, most notably at the Hayley Road aid station. Runners head out of Hayley via a short section of dirt road before turning back onto single track for a challenging climb to more rolling trail. The rock garden signals that the ten-mile loop is nearing an end and the runner will soon be back at Indian Rock House for the second time. First, however, they must traverse an oftentimes slick and technically-challenging section with moss, rock, and trees. The footing is awkward and the markings difficult to follow, due to the fact that the wise runner will concentrate on looking down at their footing rather than up at the trail markers.

While some runners slow down to an attentive walk, others seem to fly through this section, seemingly embracing the idea that the less time spent on the rocks the better. The trail is heavily shaded by hemlocks and drops down along a stream with small falls. It is mentally

and physically challenging, but gorgeous. Runners then start the climb up to the Mullins Cove trail head where they cross a dirt road and drop three-fourths of a mile to the stone stairs leading to Indian Rock House aid station. Rehydrated and fueled, runners head back along the bluff to Suck Creek Canyon and the climbs back to Mushroom Rock and the finish. They are familiar with this portion of the course since they have run it but now have the benefit of enjoying the challenging half-mile climb up to Mushroom Rock and the three short but wearing climbs to the finish in reverse.

Winner Joshua Wheeler came in three minutes ahead of last year's time for a first place men's time of 4:15. Wheeler grew up in Signal Mountain and lives in Boone, North Carolina. Nicholas Selbo, from Chattanooga, came in second in 4:21:53. Third place male finisher, Bryan Dayton finished in 4:34:57. He also grew up near Chattanooga and now lives in Boulder, Colorado. First place female was Sally Brooking from Marietta, Georgia, with a time of 5:37:28; just six minutes shy of 2008's winning time for the women. Signal Mountain resident Jaclyn Greenhill took second with 5:45:10 and Emily Ansick of Auburn, Alabama finished third in 5:51:39.

The Rock/Creek StumpJump course would not exist in its current location without the support of the Cumberland Trail Conference, a non-profit organization responsible for trail building, maintenance, and fund raising for what will eventually be a 300-plus-mile trail stretching across the state of Tennessee. ■



A rock's-eye view moments before the start

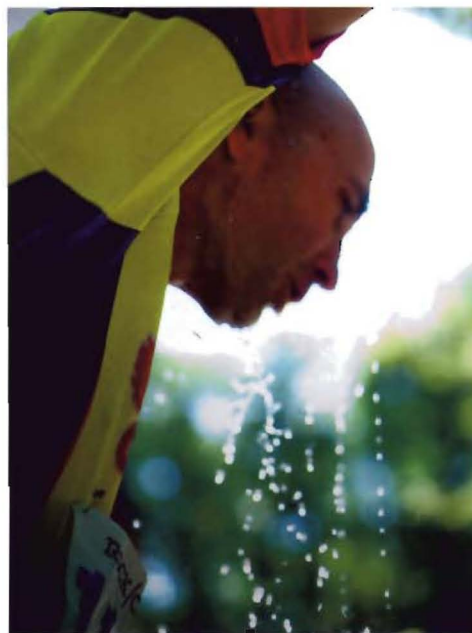
## ROCK/CREEK STUMPJUMP 50 KM | CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE OCTOBER 3 | TRAILS

|                              |         |
|------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Josh Wheeler, 21, NC      | 4:15:00 |
| 2. Nicholas Selbo, 30        | 4:21:53 |
| 3. Bryan Dayton, 36, CO      | 4:34:57 |
| 4. Jeff Edmonds, 32          | 4:38:25 |
| 5. Eric Charette, 33, AL     | 4:44:35 |
| 6. Andy Anderson, 32, CA     | 4:46:03 |
| 7. Jason Hanlin, 35, GA      | 4:47:14 |
| 8. David Rindt, 38, GA       | 4:48:22 |
| 9. Jay Curwen, 42            | 4:55:34 |
| 10. Kevin Boucher, 31        | 5:04:15 |
| 11. Eric Gilbertson, 35, AL  | 5:08:47 |
| 12. John Dove, 44, GA        | 5:10:48 |
| 13. Owen Bradley, 30, AL     | 5:13:50 |
| 14. Randy Whorton, 47        | 5:17:43 |
| 15. Clay Warner, 26, GA      | 5:21:07 |
| 16. Ryan Meulemans, 32       | 5:22:16 |
| 17. Cody Bowers, 23          | 5:24:47 |
| 18. Josh West, 27, AL        | 5:25:07 |
| 19. Kenneth Standley, 48, SC | 5:25:24 |
| 20. Brandon Sullivan, 27     | 5:28:53 |
| 21. Johnny Pryor, 49         | 5:29:38 |
| 22. Josh Buice, 32           | 5:30:07 |
| 23. Eric Lederer, 28         | 5:30:46 |
| 24. Jeff Woody, 45           | 5:32:15 |
| 25. John Wiygul, 20          | 5:33:21 |
| 26. Ken Wiggins, 36, AL      | 5:33:26 |
| 27. John Cobbs, 48, AL       | 5:35:56 |
| 28. Andrew Wortley, 29, GA   | 5:36:10 |
| 29. Eric Loffland, 35, TX    | 5:36:18 |
| 30. Andrew Helmick, 43, OH   | 5:37:11 |
| 31. Sally Brooking, 52, GA   | 5:37:28 |
| 32. C. Michael Downs, 34, KY | 5:38:11 |
| 33. Brad Reed, 34            | 5:39:51 |
| 34. Michael Scherzer, 42, GA | 5:39:55 |
| 35. Keith McAbee, 37, AL     | 5:40:00 |
| 36. Jason Mitchell, 26       | 5:42:05 |
| 37. Mike Drew, 37            | 5:42:40 |
| 38. Robert Lewellen, 37, GA  | 5:42:46 |
| 39. Thomas Boyd, 37, GA      | 5:43:00 |
| 40. Jaclyn Greenhill, 32     | 5:45:10 |
| 41. Daniel Miller, 31        | 5:45:16 |
| 42. Jack Kilislian, 39       | 5:46:20 |
| 43. Stephen Smith, 28        | 5:46:42 |
| 44. Jenny Hadfield, 42, IL   | 5:46:44 |
| 45. Rich Kepple, 37, NC      | 5:51:38 |
| 46. Emily Ansick, 25, AL     | 5:51:39 |
| 47. Jason Hamrick, 34        | 5:52:11 |
| 48. Jady N Stevens, 32       | 5:52:17 |
| 49. Micah Morrison, 36       | 5:52:38 |
| 50. Gary Dawkins, 27         | 5:55:01 |
| 51. Zach Winchester, 28      | 5:56:20 |
| 52. Paul Morphy, 48          | 5:56:22 |
| 53. William Ansick, 23, AL   | 5:56:27 |
| 54. Mark Mason, 41           | 5:56:34 |
| 55. Daniel Stephen, 38, GA   | 5:58:34 |
| 56. Chad Wamack, 38          | 6:00:09 |
| 57. Britt Reynolds, 41       | 6:00:54 |
| 58. Dean Karnazes, 47, CA    | 6:01:03 |
| 59. James Flatley, 24, SC    | 6:03:21 |
| 60. Phil Canning, 45, GA     | 6:05:59 |
| 61. Kelly Reynolds, 34, GA   | 6:06:57 |
| 62. Robert Barno, 26, GA     | 6:07:15 |
| 63. Scott Huddleston, 44     | 6:07:32 |
| 64. Sal Coll, 48             | 6:08:11 |
| 65. Tyler Robertson, 27, SC  | 6:08:12 |
| 66. Natalie Sims, 35         | 6:10:32 |
| 67. Dwayne MacInnis, 35, GA  | 6:12:13 |
| 68. Marty Fitzgerald, 47     | 6:12:45 |
| 69. Casey Tinsley, 29        | 6:13:31 |
| 70. Enid Gonzalez, 42, GA    | 6:13:48 |
| 71. John Gregg, 28, AL       | 6:14:35 |



Under the ledge

|                               |         |                                 |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------|---------|
| 72. Dreama Campbell, 37       | 6:14:39 | 89. Emily Wood, 23              | 6:30:04 |
| 73. Kristen Campbell, 21, NC  | 6:16:21 | 90. John Lerch, 34, GA          | 6:30:41 |
| 74. Eugenie Heebe, 39, NC     | 6:18:00 | 91. Zane Smith, 36              | 6:31:13 |
| 75. Meghan Lederer, 24        | 6:18:07 | 92. Angel Orlando Baez, 33, GA  | 6:31:35 |
| 76. Todd Henderson, 41, AL    | 6:18:45 | 93. David Tosch, 59, AL         | 6:31:40 |
| 77. Tim Foote, 41             | 6:18:53 | 94. Philip Sustar, 38, GA       | 6:32:22 |
| 78. Spurgeon Hendrick, 50, GA | 6:20:33 | 95. Doug Dooley, 47             | 6:32:32 |
| 79. Mark Stutzman, 31, GA     | 6:21:53 | 96. Antonio Gonzalez, 34, GA    | 6:33:03 |
| 80. Jeffery Wiese, 28         | 6:22:17 | 97. Tom Holland, 38             | 6:33:13 |
| 81. David Morris, 32          | 6:22:34 | 98. Crandall Caughman, 39       | 6:35:02 |
| 82. Trey Campbell, 35         | 6:23:09 | 99. Chad Helberg, 37            | 6:35:26 |
| 83. Scott Archibald, 25       | 6:25:22 | 100. Zach Cowart, 33            | 6:36:01 |
| 84. David Elkin, 43, MS       | 6:26:09 | 101. Connor Haugh, 45           | 6:36:35 |
| John Brower, 34, MS           | 6:26:09 | 102. Nick Lacotti, 40, GA       | 6:39:56 |
| 86. Tyler Fricks, 17          | 6:26:30 | 103. John Fellers, 37           | 6:42:29 |
| 87. Johnny Buice, 55, GA      | 6:28:43 | 104. Andy Barksdale, 32, MS     | 6:42:35 |
| 88. Pat Flynn, 48, AL         | 6:29:14 | 105. Ben Green, 29, GA          | 6:42:46 |
|                               |         | 106. Aaron Mercer, 41           | 6:43:01 |
|                               |         | 107. Jenny Rindt, 37, GA        | 6:43:40 |
|                               |         | 108. Leslie Becht, 25           | 6:44:16 |
|                               |         | 109. Herb Kieklak, 50, FL       | 6:46:31 |
|                               |         | 110. Vikena Yutz, 38, GA        | 6:46:53 |
|                               |         | 111. Jenny Pittam, 29, GA       | 6:47:09 |
|                               |         | 112. Gregory Hartsfield, 34, GA | 6:47:10 |
|                               |         | 113. Daniel Higgins, 34, GA     | 6:47:20 |
|                               |         | 114. Elizabeth Starzyk, 38, GA  | 6:48:18 |
|                               |         | 115. Robert Dukes, 47, GA       | 6:48:22 |
|                               |         | 116. Carl Jordan, 38, GA        | 6:48:53 |
|                               |         | 117. Blake Salmony, 26          | 6:49:26 |
|                               |         | Dale Burke, 41, GA              | 6:49:26 |
|                               |         | 119. Erik Pardue, 39, GA        | 6:49:50 |
|                               |         | 120. Kathy Youngren, 35, AL     | 6:49:54 |
|                               |         | 121. Anfew Hackett, 42, GA      | 6:51:01 |
|                               |         | 122. Ashley Nichols, 38, VA     | 6:53:07 |
|                               |         | 123. Sean O, 37, GA             | 6:53:15 |
|                               |         | 124. Sarah Woerner, 20          | 6:54:38 |
|                               |         | 125. Karin Sturgeon, 35, KY     | 6:57:06 |
|                               |         | 126. Melanie Bloemer, 29, KY    | 6:57:07 |
|                               |         | 127. Robert Kulisek, 30         | 6:57:31 |
|                               |         | 128. Craig Kelly, 61, AL        | 6:58:25 |
|                               |         | 129. Shane Shelton, 18          | 6:58:35 |
|                               |         | 130. Gregory Wirtz, 53, TX      | 6:58:47 |
|                               |         | 131. Nancy Lewis, 44, GA        | 6:58:48 |
|                               |         | 132. Lisa Zaccarelli, 40        | 6:59:43 |
|                               |         | 133. Rhett Sample, 25, KY       | 7:00:30 |
|                               |         | 134. Chris Lasonde, 51, AL      | 7:02:07 |



Taking an ultra-shower



Aid station madness

ANDREW KORNYLAK

- Jon Ross, 40, GA 7:02:07
- 136. Andy Pippenger, 38 7:05:26
- 137. Robert Lewis, 37, GA 7:06:51
- 138. Lauren Smith, 22 7:07:37
- Gary Owen, 21 7:07:37
- 140. Corey Weldon, 33 7:07:54
- 141. James Crosby, 31, GA 7:08:18
- 142. Kyle Stichtenoth, 28, AL 7:08:39
- 143. Chad Walters, 25 7:08:54
- 144. Belinda Young, 40, GA 7:09:12
- 145. Sergio Bianchini, 68 7:12:32
- 146. Kristel Maes, 32, GA 7:12:42
- 147. Scott Bowman, 37 7:13:31
- 148. Christian Griffith, 39, GA 7:15:15
- 149. Adam Rains, 25 7:16:10
- 150. Tony Harper, 42 7:21:14
- 151. Harley Hollingsworth, 31, MS 7:21:18

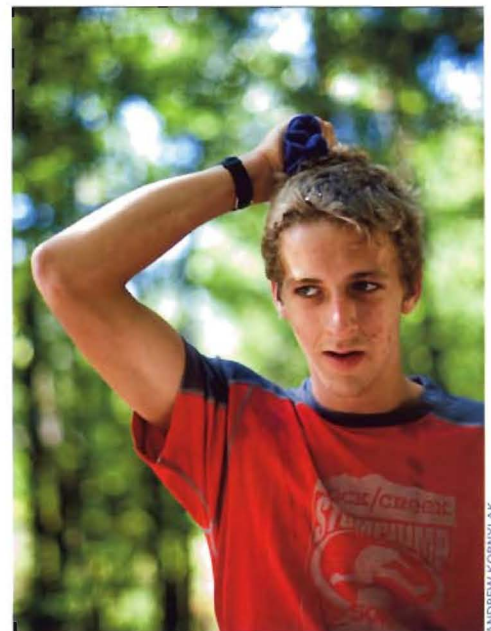
- 152. Douglas Williams, 45, IN 7:23:24
- 153. Julia Martin, 33, AL 7:24:24
- 154. Wayne Downey, 43, GA 7:25:33
- 155. Brian Trinkle, 47, GA 7:27:54
- 156. Jennifer Ford, 33, AL 7:28:07
- 157. Derek Moore, 36, NC 7:29:49
- 158. Glenn Peison, 26, SC 7:30:10
- 159. Michael Smithson, 50, GA 7:31:22
- 160. John Prevot, 32 7:32:30
- 161. Jim Jones, 50 7:34:32
- 162. Randy King, 55 7:34:39
- 163. Lauren Dieterich, 27, GA 7:34:41
- 164. Jenny Magill, 34 7:34:45
- 165. Naomi Kirchner, 25, GA 7:34:54
- 166. Jared Wilson, 25 7:35:15
- 167. Philip Marler, 40, MS 7:35:29
- George Flatau, 37 7:35:29
- 169. Rob Trumble, 41 7:35:56
- Lindsey Waugh, 27 7:35:56
- 171. William Armstrong, 29 7:37:04
- 172. Vincent Voisin, 34, GA 7:37:58
- 173. Thomas Herring, 44 7:38:51
- 174. Tom Craven, 62, HI 7:39:36
- 175. Jarett Hall, 27 7:40:32
- 176. Cheryl Triko, 37 7:41:06
- Chris Triko, 37 7:41:06
- 178. Sandy Geisel, 45, GA 7:41:40
- 179. Carin Hopton, 39, GA 7:41:41
- 180. Michael Hopton, 38, GA 7:41:42
- 181. Jeff Henderson, 48, GA 7:41:55
- 182. Jeffrey Gelinis, 47, GA 7:43:10
- 183. Joshua Albert, 22 7:43:35
- Joe Albert, 28, GA 7:43:35
- 185. Marla Albert, 38 7:43:36
- 186. Justin Harkins, 26, GA 7:43:57
- 187. John Wood, 59, FL 7:44:03
- 188. Steve Michael, 59, GA 7:44:12
- 189. Randy West, 52, AL 7:45:56
- 190. Christopher Mcentee, 42, GA 7:46:06
- 191. Rob Apple, 48 7:46:41
- 192. Fred Stuchell, 40, FL 7:47:09
- 193. Kelly Williams, 39, GA 7:48:58
- 194. Lance Haney, 27, AL 7:49:17
- 195. Jody Rivera, 32, AL 7:49:49
- 196. Paul Smith, 32 7:52:02
- 197. Andrew Alexson, 50 7:53:59

- 198. Josh Elrod, 25 7:57:00
- 199. Kirk Henry, 27 7:59:52
- 200. Dan Young, 34, MS 7:59:53
- Michael Weaver, 35, MS 7:59:53
- 202. Jeffrey Vieyra, 62, CA 8:04:09
- 203. Katherine Russell, 28 8:04:18
- 204. Tim Davis, 41 8:06:46
- 205. Thom Sokol, 29, GA 8:07:18
- 206. Adam Russell, 34 8:12:09
- 207. Lynda Webber, 50 8:12:55
- 208. Andy Stafford, 38 8:13:30
- 209. Rebecca Cohen, 43, GA 8:16:29
- 210. Fred Trowse, 57, AL 8:17:16
- 211. Christopher Kulisek, 28, KY 8:19:15
- 212. Erik Ladd, 32, GA 8:19:44
- Todd Counter, 34, GA 8:19:44
- 214. Buddy Rabun, 56, GA 8:20:13
- 215. Josh Edmond, 29, AL 8:21:51
- 216. Kevin Reneau, 52 8:24:58
- 217. Lee Hollingsworth, 56, AL 8:27:07
- 218. Iva Lightsey, 48, MS 8:30:08
- Lori Ladd, 43, MS 8:30:08
- 220. Joshua Cutler, 30 8:34:32
- Autumn Hallmark, 20, AL 8:34:32
- Daryl Hallmark, 51, AL 8:34:32
- 223. Larry Rigsby, 58 8:36:11
- 224. James Taylor, 47, GA 8:36:12
- 225. Mike Brogdon, 35, GA 8:36:34
- 226. J. Dewayne Sandidge, 54 8:41:07
- 227. Dan Herring, 55, ID 8:41:24
- 228. Van Huynh-Leap, 41, FL 8:42:32
- 229. Michael Robinson, 35, FL 8:42:37
- 230. Steve Meeks, 52, AL 9:00:00+
- 231. David Milner, 45, GA 9:00:00+
- 232. Faun Ramey, 41 9:00:00+
- 233. Rebecca Diange, 49, FL 9:00:00+
- 234. Lynn Holtam, 46, AL 9:00:00+
- 235. Lionel Higdon, 46, GA 9:00:00+
- 236. Amy McBride, 26 9:00:00+
- 237. Dan Albert, 38 9:00:00+
- 238. Graham Gallemore, 66, AL 9:25:18
- 239. Jeremy Gore, 33, AL 9:00:00+
- 240. Carolyn Dukes, 31, GA 9:00:00+
- 241. David Fanning I, 45, AL 9:00:00+
- 242. Adam Ragland, 36 9:00:00+



Putting the hammer down, down, down

ANDREW KORNYLAK



Cool relief, then back on the trail

ANDREW KORNYLAK