

Wapack Trail Race Race Report

September 5, 2010

Race day was marked by mostly sunny skies, very low humidity, temperatures in the 60s, dry trail conditions, and nice cooling breezes along the course. Seventy three finishers enjoyed as beautiful a day as one could ever hope for.

The Wapack Trail goes from Greenfield, NH to Ashburnham, MA and the race is run out and back over the 9 mile section from New Ipswich, NH to Ashburnham. There are four peaks to go over in each direction and the total elevation climb for the 18 miles is 4,000 feet or more. To put these 18 miles in perspective, the finishing time of a runner in the Wapack Trail Race is very close to the time they can run a road marathon, though that is about the only thing those two types of running events have in common!

The Wapack Trail was re-routed around Windblown XC Ski Area this year due to loss of use of parts of the trail that run across private property. The re-route is perhaps 1/2 mile longer. Nevertheless, most repeat runners actually shaved some time off their previous best times, perhaps because the terrain is more runnable and the footing is smoother over the re-routed trail. In any case, because of the significant change in the course, the age group records were all reset this year.

Taking first place in a remarkable time of 2:23:50 was 45-year old Dave Herr of Canaan, VT. Dave has the fastest time seen in the race, with a time of 2:21:16 set in 2002, since the race began in 1992. The others in the top five were Jim Johnson (2:28:13, 30-39 age group winner), Brian Rusiecki (2:30:46), William Hawkins (2:35:44), and Gregg Hammett (2:36:53), so the competition was very strong. The 50-59 age group winner, in a time of 3:19:10, was NE and National ultra distance champion of the 90s and early 00s, Jim Garcia of Westford, MA, who has recently started running again after a hiatus. Race Director Paul Funch took honors in the 60-69 age group with a time of 3:17:06.

On the women's side, Erica LaBella, 31, from Sugar Hill, NH, put in a very strong effort, finishing in 3:10:19 and eclipsing Sarah Tanner's course record of 3:18:47 which has held for the past five years. Jeanne Christie, 52, of Windham ME, held on to her 50-59 age group record with a time of 4:30:52.

The Wapack Trail Race in 2011 will be held on the Sunday of Labor Day weekend.