

2023 Rocky Mountain Flyathlon- Lake Fork Rules



General Rules

- Race will begin promptly on Saturday, September 23rd, 2023 at 9:00 am. Since we will be starting and finishing this year's race at the field where we will be camping, this start time should not be a problem for anyone. If you are coming in on race morning, please show up at the starting line in plenty of time to listen to last minute course updates and other announcements (8:30 am to be safe).
- The 2023 Lake Fork Flyathlon is officially permitted by the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service. This is our seventh time holding this event. Let's maintain our stellar reputation. Please respect the race course, the people that are on it, and the field that we will be camping in. Our reputation as an organization is on the line, so please don't be a jack ass. **This includes not starting any campfires outside of our primary party area, unless you have one of those portable propane fire pits.**
- Water will be available at the start / finish line. PLEASE BRING A WATER BOTTLE OR HYDRATION PACK to carry all of the water (and your fishing crap) that you will need during the race. I do not recommend drinking the Lake Fork Gunnison water directly, but it is fine if you have a water filter. Water will also be available at the turn-around point (5 miles down road)...
- I do not know what the weather will be like on race day, so please plan appropriately. If it rains, bring a rainjacket. If it is super hot, run in a Speedo, but wear sunscreen. But seriously, please plan ahead and make sure that you have everything you might need in the case of adverse weather, given that this event takes place in a remote and unpredictable environment. Event is rain or shine, and we will only cancel it if it is getting dangerous out there.

Run

- You must have your fishing equipment with you throughout the entire run. This is an out-and-back course, so it may seem like a good strategy to ditch your gear after you have caught a fish. But we have thought about that, and so our volunteers will be looking to make sure you have your gear at the turn-around point and at the finish line. **You may run (and start/finish) with your fly rod assembled, but based on personal experience, this strategy can prove costly.**
- The 2023 Lake Fork Flyathlon event will be run on a fairly remote dirt road in Gunnison County. Because the race is on a road that *will remain open during the event*, please use caution while you are running on the road and when you are returning to the road from fishing. In the event that you do run into someone not associated with our event, please respect their right to enjoy the area as well. Do not sweat on, swear at, or spit on anyone, steal anyone's fish and photograph it as your own, etc...
- There will be **several** checkpoints on the course. *Please announce your race number to the volunteer at each checkpoint, and make sure that they have checked you off their list.* If you

neglect to check in at all checkpoints for your course, you can be disqualified. Please take the time to ensure that our volunteers have acknowledged that you have passed them...

- The road should be in very good shape, so running should be easy. Getting down to the stream to fish, on the other hand, can be difficult in places. The descent to the creek is rocky and relatively steep in many areas. Please take your time as you descend down to the Lake Fork so you do not injure yourself. Yes it is a race, but not worth hurting yourself badly over.
- The Lake Fork of the Gunnison is a decent sized stream, and so you may be tempted to wade out into it to get the best angle for that pig fish. If you do choose to wade, please be super cautious... Also, remember that you will have to run in those wet running shoes. There are plenty of good areas to cast without getting into the stream (assuming you get to those locations before your competition...).
- If you do happen to get injured, please try to get back to the road so that one of the other racers can let us know at the nearest checkpoint. If you cannot make it back to the road, please yell our use your Flyathlon whistle to get the attention of other passing competitors. Volunteers at the checkpoints will have radios to let us know that we need to help. They will also have satellite messengers, in case of emergency. We are able to drive the road, so we will get to you as quickly as possible!
- There are bathrooms at the start / turn-around / finish of the course. If you are so moved at other locations in the course, do so well off of the trail (but not in the stream).

Fish

- The fish portion of the event will be conducted as follows:
 - *You must have a current Colorado fishing license to participate in this event!* Please take care of this before you get to the starting line. There are several places to purchase one in Gunnison, including Gene Taylor's (depending on when you roll through town). We will be checking fishing licenses the evening before and the morning of the event.
 - Race fishing is catch and release.
 - When/if you catch a fish, you will need to generate photo evidence that proves you caught a fish. You will need to carry some sort of device (digital camera, iPhone, Polaroid) to generate this evidence. **We will not have paper Flyathlon race bibs in 2023, but instead will provide you with an alternative means of documenting the length of your fish.** Please minimize your impact on the fish that your catch by keeping the fish hooked in a net and in the water until the very last minute once you have your camera and tape measure ready. Get a good photo but do it quickly and then release the fish!
 - At the finish line, you will produce evidence of ONE fish at the judge's table / beer cooler. You may catch more than one while you are out there, but the clock is ticking and you only get credit for one...
 - A *crippling* time penalty will be assessed if you show up at the beer cooler with no fish evidence.

- A course-specific time bonus will be awarded based on the length of the fish you have presented (e.g. 3 minutes off per *complete* inch of fish). Make sure to get a good photo so we can accurately assess the length of the fish in the photo. Just make sure you get a good photo on something that we can measure at the finish line (insert third grade potty humor here...). Course-specific time bonuses will be based on how fishy the stream is leading up to the event, and will be announced the morning of the Flyathlon. **Oh, and if you catch a really big fish (i.e. greater than 14 inches), you will get an extra bonus for those inches above 14!**
- If you are concerned about catching a fish or have struggled monumentally to catch one with no success, we will have volunteer fish whisperers on the course (Ben McGee / Kristine Hoffman). These people are not miracle workers but will do their best to help coach you into catching a fish, so please listen carefully to their words. They are magical. We will tell you where these fish whisperers are on race morning.
- Additional rules intended to discourage poor-sportsmanship and/or cheating:
 - Planted and/or dead fish in the backpack- We have been doing this long enough that we can tell the difference between living, stressed and dead fish, even in photos.
 - Live fish in the Camelback- Seriously?
 - Fishing sabotage- Throwing a rock into the stream after you catch your fish to slow down your opponent is not just uncool, it is cheating.
 - Team fishing- Catching a fish for your boyfriend / girlfriend / spouse / friend is cheating. Using the same fish in two pictures (on different race bibs) is sad, and easily identified as cheating. If, however, you wish to stop and coach someone who is new to fly fishing (as happened in 2014 in Middle Creek), please feel free to do so...

Beer

- Racers are encouraged to beer-carbo-load the night before. Pretending to enjoy yourself in order to be fresh for the actual race may result in a DQ.
- Plenty of canned and draft beer will be available at the finish line.
- If you choose to stay in the Town of Gunnison or at another campground, please make good beer choices at the post-race party. You really don't want a DUI this weekend, do you?
- Fabulous sponsor prizes will be presented for the following categories:
 - Male winner
 - Female winner
 - Biggest fish
 - Smallest fish
 - Top fundraiser
 - Almost top fundraiser

Thanks again for participating in the 2023 Lake Fork Flyathlon! We appreciate your involvement and support.

run. fish. beer.

-Running Rivers Board of Directors