

2024 Rocky Mountain Flyathlon- Middle Creek Flyathlon Rules



General Rules

- Race will begin promptly on Saturday, August 3rd, 2024 at 9:00 am. This will allow us to leave our tents set up at the Upper Crossing Guard Station, complete the event in a reasonable amount of time, and get back to camp for the post-race event. Please show up at the starting line in plenty of time to put on sunscreen, fill up with water, and listen to last minute course updates and other announcements.
- The 2024 Middle Creek Flyathlon is officially permitted by the U.S. Forest Service Saguache Ranger District. This is the TENTH official Flyathlon in Middle Creek. Let's maintain our stellar reputation. Please respect the trail, the creek, and the guard station. Our reputation as an event is on the line, so please don't be a jack ass.
- Water will be available at the start / finish line. PLEASE BRING A WATER BOTTLE OR HYDRATION PACK to carry all of your water (and your fishing crap) that you will need during the race. I do not recommend drinking Middle Creek water directly, but if you have a good portable filter (e.g. Katadyn Be Free), it is fine. Race checkpoints will have some way to filter water, but that will cost you time...
- We do not know what the weather will be like on race day, so please plan appropriately. If it looks like rain, bring a rain jacket. If it is super hot, run in a Speedo, but please 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 looking dangerous out there. **All checkpoints will be equipped with an air horn in 2024. If you hear an air horn, it means that we have received word of bad weather and are calling the event. When safe, please proceed back to the start line ASAP.**
- We will have Flyathlon-branded whistles for everyone by race day to carry in your pack in case you injure yourself in the woods and need to alert us to your location.

Run

- You must have your fishing equipment with you throughout the run. Both courses include an out-and-back section, 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 my neighbor will be looking to make sure you have your gear at the turn-around point. You may run with your fly rod assembled, but based on personal experience, this strategy can prove costly.
- The 2024 Middle Creek Flyathlon events will be run on fairly remote trails in the San Luis Valley. In the unlikely event that you do run into someone not associated with our event (or their goats), respect their right to enjoy the area as well. Do not run anyone off the trail, sweat or spit on anyone, steal anyone's fish and photograph it as your own, etc... There are also

frequently livestock on or near this trail (Forest Service says that you are likely to run into cows in Upper East Middle Creek this year). Please give them adequate space, lest you get gored.

- There will be **several** checkpoints on the course, strategically placed near locations where you might deviate off of the main trail to pursue fish. ***Please announce your race number to the volunteer at each checkpoint, and tell them your intentions.*** If you plan to take one of these other trails to fish, you will need to check back in with the volunteer before getting back onto the main trail (so we don't lose you in the woods). If you neglect to check in at all checkpoints for your course, you will be disqualified. Please take the time to ensure that our volunteers have acknowledged that you have passed them...
- The 2024 trails will likely have challenging footing and downed trees in some places, so please do not trip or break anything. We will be clearing the courses with a chainsaw the days before the event and will try to remove or flag anything of significance.
- Stay on the trail, except when fishing. Shortcutting can result in a DQ, and can cause erosion. Further, the courses are not conducive to shortcutting.
- There is a bathroom at the start / 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 creek). If it is #2, bury it deep.
- Uphill traffic has the right of way.
- The trail runs along the creek for most of the course. In the unlikely and unhappy event that you manage to get injured down near the creek, please try to make yourself visible to the trail and call (or whistle, if you have brought one, as recommended above) for help. Volunteers at the checkpoints will have radios to let me know that we need to help. They will also have emergency satellite messengers, in case of emergency.
- There are several steep slopes accessing East Middle Creek. Please consider accessing the creek at access points that are not super steep. Should you choose to go down a steep embankment, take it slow. Yes it is a race, but not worth hurting yourself badly over.

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 mountains, as there is not a great place to purchase one nearby. We will be checking Colorado fishing licenses the morning of the event.
 - Race fishing is catch and release. Particularly if you catch a cutthroat.
 - In an effort to be inclusive of all types, we have decided to allow all types of fisherpeople in this year's events. So bring your spin-rod and run-friendly tackle box if that is how you roll. We will try not to judge you.
 - 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 have official Keep Fish Wet Flyathlon race rulers in 2024 to measure your fish. **Please minimize your impact on the fish that you 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 approximate length of the fish you have presented (e.g. 3 minutes off per *complete* inch of fish). Try to make sure to get a good photo so we can accurately assess the length of the fish in the photo (i.e. on your tape measure, fly rod, your arm). Course specific time bonuses will be based on how fishy the streams are leading up to the event and will be announced the morning of the Flyathlon.
- A multiplier will be added to your bonus if the fish you catch is a cutthroat (not a cuttbow). This multiplier may be 1.5X or 2X, TBD based on fishing conditions.
- If you do choose to fish for cutthroat trout above the turn-around point, please ensure that you have NOT waded in waters lower in the course. This is to prevent any possibility to disease / invasive species transfer. **If you catch a brook trout (and can 100% accurately identify it as such) above the Cow Skull Hill turn-around point, please kill it and bring it back to the checkpoint with you!!**
- Additional rules intended to discourage poor-sportsmanship and/or cheating:
 - Planted and/or dead fish in the backpack- I am a fish biologist. I 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 beaver pond / stream after you catch your fish to slow down your opponent is not just juvenile and 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, please feel free to do so...
- Of course, there will be at least one Fish Whisperer out on course. Their job is to help you in trying to catch a fish, so please utilize and learn from them if you don't know how to fish or are just having a hard day.

Beer

- Fine craft beer from several different Colorado breweries (and several CO whiskies) will be served after the event back at the Upper Crossing Guard Station.
- 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.
- Awards will be presented in the following categories:

- Male winners long and short course
- Female winners long and short course
- King and Queen of WTF Hill (long course)
- Biggest fish
- Smallest fish
- Top three fundraisers
- The Backwoods Bastard (or Backwoods Broad) Award

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

run. fish. beer. whiskey.