

WHITEROCK ULTRA

2026 ATHLETE GUIDE



July 25, 2026

1314 Fig Ave., Coon Rapids, Iowa

*This document contains important race day information for the [Whiterock Ultra 50K and 50-mile races](#).
Please review prior to the event.*

Emergency contacts

Race Directors:

Michael McGinn: (515) 441-9676

Greg Gayman: (515) 783-8442

Local Emergency: 911. The call will be routed to the emergency center in Guthrie Center. You will be at Whiterock Conservancy near Coon Rapids. Have them route your call to the Emergency Services in Coon Rapids.

About Whiterock

Whiterock is a 5,500-acre nonprofit land trust nestled along seven miles of the Middle Raccoon River Valley. This hidden gem in central Iowa has 40+ miles of scenic trails and balances sustainable agriculture, natural resource protection and public recreation on the landscape.

By acreage, this would qualify this private land trust as one of the largest state parks in Iowa. It also boasts one of the largest trail networks in the entire state, including state parks and wilderness preserves. The land is nestled in a valley that boasts some of the darkest skies in Iowa based on its Bortle rating. Whiterock is secretly one of the best nature preserves in Iowa and it is a privately run nonprofit.

Our goal is to raise visibility for the beauty and accessibility of Whiterock and to support its conservation efforts.

Proceeds from this event are donated back to Whiterock Conservancy.



ABOUT THE RACE

The Whiterock Ultra is organized by Greg Gayman and Michael McGinn under the corporation Former Athlete, LLC. There are two events: a 50K and 50-mile trail race. The race is run at [Whiterock Conservancy](#) and includes almost all of their expansive trail network of singletrack, doubletrack and pea gravel trails.

2026 RACE INFORMATION

- Friday, July 24, 5-11:30 p.m.: Packet pick up at Burr Oak Visitor's Center (1436 Highway 141, Coon Rapids, IA 50058) **Both 50-mile participants and 50K participants may pick up during this time.**
- Friday, July 24, 6-8 p.m.: Pre-race meal at River Campground (1314 Fig Ave., Coon Rapids, IA 50058)
- Friday, July 24, 11:45 p.m.: Pre-race brief
- Saturday, July 25: 12:01 a.m.: Race Start for the 50 Mile
- Saturday, July 25, 5-7 a.m.: Packet pick up (50K runners) at River Campground (1314 Fig Ave., Coon Rapids, IA 50058)
- Saturday, July 25, 6:45 a.m.: Pre-race brief
- Saturday, July 25, 7 a.m.: Race Start for the 50K
- ***Saturday, July 25, 5 p.m.: Finishline cutoff for both races***



RULES

Be kind.

You are responsible for you and your crew. If your crew is being disruptive or unsportsmanlike, they will be asked to leave and the associated athlete may be punished at the discretion of the race director.

No cheating. Please stay on the course. Outside assistance (crew support) is not permitted away from the River Campground, unless it is available to all runners (Ex. A convenience store, hand ups, a farmer with a hose).

You must complete the course in its entirety to be eligible for awards.

Trekking poles are allowed.

Pacers are not allowed.

Assistance from crew is permitted within **River Campground** only.

Space is limited at the River Campground. Family and crew are welcome to provide aid in this area but please be mindful of what items are brought to this area. Items such as canopies, hyperbaric chambers and massage tables are not allowed.

Drop bags should be roughly the same size of a personal item you bring on an airplane (25L). If you need a 110 Quart cooler that is best left in your vehicle.

No Littering. Any runner caught littering will be punished up to, and including, disqualification.

Course Overview

50K: The 50K race will start on Saturday, July 25, at 7 a.m. The course consists of three loops: a **RED** loop, **WHITE** loop and **BLUE** loop (loop descriptions below). Cutoff time for the 50K: 5 p.m. (10 hours). The 50K course has approximately 3,000 feet of climb.

50 Mile: The 50-mile race will start 7 hours earlier on Saturday, July 25 ... at 12:01 a.m., midnight! The 50-mile consists of (in order) two RED Loops, two WHITE loops, and one BLUE loop. Cutoff time for the 50 mile: 5 p.m. (17 hours). The 50-mile course has approximately 5,000 feet of climb.

IMPORTANT: The 50-mile race will start one minute after midnight from Friday, July 24 INTO Saturday July 25. Both races end at 5 p.m. on Saturday, July 25.

The only course cutoff for both races is that all runners must have started the Blue Loop by 2 p.m.

****NOTE:** There will be two full aid stations that runners will pass through every 6-7 miles. For the 50K, runners must pass through the main aid station (River Campground) 3 times (including the finish) and the Garst Farm Aid Station once. Mid-way through the white loop, runners will cross Fig Avenue and be

Course Map. Below is a high-level map designed to give you an overview of the course. (*Note: the name of this year's Aid Station is "River Campground", not "River House Barn" as listed on the map below.*)



Loop Descriptions

IMPORTANT: We work very hard to provide a well-marked course. That said, understanding the route is ultimately the runner's responsibility. **If you think you will have trouble navigating the course, please print these turn-by-turn directions and include them in your running pack, and [download the GPX files](#).**

Red Loop (7.8 miles)

Detail:

- From the Start line, head EAST and connect with the Main Loop Trail.
- The Main Loop trail will turn and head north up a hill. Turn RIGHT (EAST) onto Bluebell Trail (single track/equestrian/pea gravel), stay on Bluebell until it intersects again with Eastern Spur/Main Loop Trail.
- Take a RIGHT (East) on Eastern Spur/Main Loop, then turn LEFT (North) onto White Oak Trail. Stay on White Oak Trail until it intersects with Eastern Spur/Main Loop Trail.
- Follow Eastern Spur and Stay RIGHT (West) on Main Loop Trail.
- Follow Main Loop Trail into Oak Ridge Campground. Water is available here. The trail will go through the campground to 125th St.
- Turn left (West) on 125th St. Follow 125th St. until it comes to a T intersection with Fig Ave. Continue Straight on Main Loop Trail.
- Follow Main Loop Trail until Red Rock Climb. Turn left (South West) on Red Rock Climb.
- Follow Red Rock climb to Bobcat Trail. Turn Left (South) on Bobcat Trail.
- Follow Bobcat trail to Red Rock Spur. Turn Left (South) on Red Rock Spur and follow the trail under the bridge back to River Campground for AID.

White Loop (11.4 Miles)

Detail:

- Leave the River Campground Aid Station, turn right (West) on Fig Ave. over the bridge, turn left (South) and connect with Shooting Star Trail.

- Follow Shooting Star trail and turn Right (South) on to Big Dipper Trail.
- Turn Right (South West) on Little Dipper Loop to head to Star Field campground.
- Little Dipper trail will enter into Star Field campground. Water is available here. Signs will be posted to continue East to rejoin Little Dipper Trail.
- Continue on Little Dipper and veer right (NE) onto Big Dipper Trail. Stay on Big Dipper until you reconnect with Shooting Star Trail.
- Turn Right (North) to stay on Shooting Star Trail. Runners have the option to exit Shooting Star trail on to Fig Ave to receive aid at the River Campground or they skip the aid station by running under the Fig Ave bridge and continuing on the course.
- If the runner went to the aid station, Exit River Campground South and turn right (SW) to Fig Ave. Head SW on Fig Ave. over the bridge. Turn Right (NW) onto Riverside Trail.
- Stay on Riverside Trail until it connects with Long Creek Trail.
- Turn left (WEST) onto Long Creek Trail; stay on Long Creek Trail until it connects with the 805 spur.
- Turn right (South) down 805 Spur, past 805 River cabin and reconnect with Riverside Trail.
- Continue south on Riverside Trail. Turn left (East) onto Fig Ave. After crossing the bridge, turn left (North) and follow the trail to loop under the bridge back to River Campground.

Blue Loop (11.7 Miles)

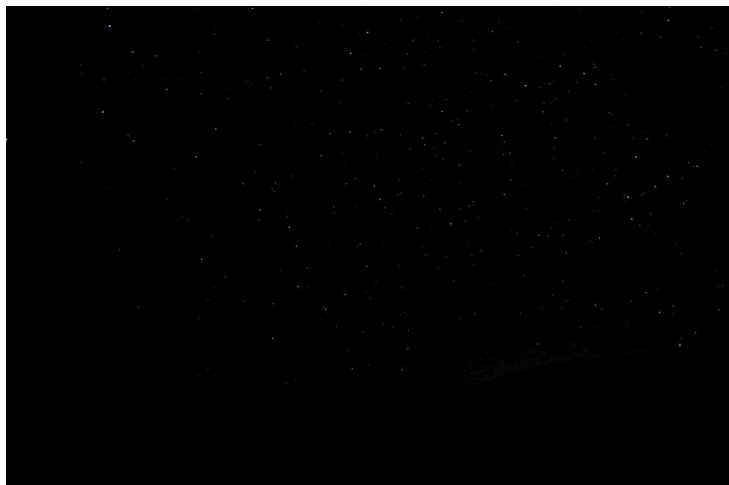
Detail:

- From the start/finish at the River Campground, head north up the Red Rock Spur until Redrock Climb.
- Turn right (East) on to Redrock Climb. Follow Redrock Climb to Main Loop Trail.
- Turn Left (North) on to Main Loop Trail. Follow the Main Loop Trail to End Lane.
- Turn right (North) on to End Land (gravel road). Follow End Lane to Main Loop Trail.
- Turn Left (West) then a quick right (North) to get back on to Main Loop Trail. Follow the Main Loop Trail to Steve Garst Trail.
- Turn right (North) on to Steve Garst Trail. Follow Steve Garst Trail into Coon Rapids.
- Follow Steve Garst Trail until it ends/runs into Main Street. Turn Left (West) on Main Street. Follow Main Street until 5th Ave.

- Turn Left (South) on to 5th Ave. Follow 5th Ave. until the Coon Rapids Golf Association and Town Loop Trail. Follow the Town Loop Trail under Highway 141.
- Follow the Main Loop Trail to Garst Family Pond - AID STATION. Continue Straight (South) to go around Garst Family Pond and go up Completely Unnecessary Hill.
- Follow Lake Loop until it comes to Garst Family Farm Rd. Turn Left (North) on Garst Family Farm Rd.
- Continue on Garst Family Farm Rd. and then take two quick right turns (South).
- Follow Town Loop Trail. Stay on the Town Loop Trail (Right) and head south back to Main Loop Trail.
- Connect with the Main Loop Trail and continue south. Make a quick right (West) onto Sunrise Trail.
- Follow Sunrise Trail until it connects to Main Loop Trail.
- Turn Right (South) on to Main Loop Trail. Follow Main Loop Trail until 805 Spur.
- At 805 Spur, there are three possible routes; Left, straight and right. Continue straight (South East) on the trail that may not necessarily look like a trail. This is the Main Loop Trail.
- Follow the Main Loop Trail to Prairie Spur. Turn Left (East) to stay on Main Loop Trail. Follow Main Loop Trail to Fig Ave.
- Turn left (East) on to Fig Ave. After crossing the bridge, turn left (North) and follow the trail to loop under the bridge back to River Campground to the **FINISH!!**

River Campground Aid Station

This is the main aid station of the race and can get kind of crazy, especially when coming in at night. **This is what it looks like at night:**



NEW THIS YEAR! Below is where the aid station and drop bag tent will be located in River Campground. This will be well marked and there will be plenty of volunteers here, along with signage directing you on how to start each loop.



Aerial shot of River Campground. The green field is where you will park.

FAQs

Aid Station Summary

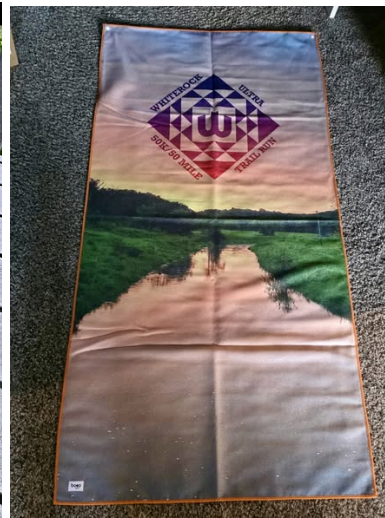
Aid stations will be staffed by volunteers; **please be sure to thank them!** Aid Stations will be fully stocked with the following items. If these do not meet your needs, please come prepared with your own nutrition.

- Water
- Heed 2.0 (Lemon Lime)
- Coca Cola
- Coffee
- Hammer Gel
- Endurolytes Extreme
- Bananas
- Watermelon

- Gummi Bears
- Vegetable Broth
- Pretzels
- Trail Mix
- Uncrustables
- Goldfish Crackers
- Cookies

Awards

Custom awards will be given to the top 3 finishers (male & female) for the 50K and 50 mile. All finishers will receive a unique handmade award, as well as a performance car seat towel from Boco, which you will get at packet pick up.



Crew Information

IMPORTANT: Crew access/support is **ONLY** available at River Campground. Runners may not receive aid from their crews at any other point on the course. Failure to comply will result in disqualification.

The areas in green on the image on the next page are a good place to offer your runner aid. **The road (Fig Ave.) is quite busy and is a bad place to offer your runner aid.**



Cup-Free Race

This is a cup-free race. We will not have cups for water at aid stations. We do this to cut down on trash we produce. Conditions will likely be VERY hot and VERY humid. You must bring at a minimum a handheld to put fluids in.



Cut-Off Times

IMPORTANT: If you do not start the Blue Loop by 2 p.m., you will not be permitted to continue. This goes for both 50K and 50-mile runners. Runners must finish by 5 p.m. to be considered in the official results.

Course Maps (GPX)

Below are links to GPX Files of the three loops (**IMPORTANT – these are last year’s GPX files. Everything is correct with the exception of the adjustment to River Campground as the primary aid station.**)

- Red Loop - <https://connect.garmin.com/modern/course/32685405>
- White Loop - <https://connect.garmin.com/modern/course/32685312>
- Blue Loop - <https://connect.garmin.com/modern/course/32685455>

Course Markings

Each loop will have color-coded flags with reflective tape for each respective loop. There will be **RED**, **WHITE** and **BLUE** flags depending on which loop you are running. The flags will be on your right-hand side. In some cases there is two-way traffic, so they could be on BOTH the left and right. Turns will be marked with two flags, signs and trail markings. The trail system also has very vibrant trail signs that are highly reflective. Rest assured – our course is very well marked!

Drop Bags

Drop bags are permitted at the River Campground Aid Station. There will be a large tent set up with a sign reading “**POET** Pavilion.” You will be able to access them after each loop. Runners of the 50K will pass through at least 3 times. Runners of the 50 mile will pass through at least 5 times.



Photo of Poet Pavilion tent. You can place your drop bags here.

Dropping Out

If you are dropping out you must notify us. If you do decide to drop, we strongly recommend you do so at River Campground Aid Station. You can call/text either Mike or Greg at any time, but be warned cell service is limited and we may miss your call. **Racer safety is a top priority and if you fail to notify us then we need to send someone out to look for you!**

Emergency Messaging/Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, please seek shelter at the nearest available shelter. Please reference the map on **Page 5**.

We will try to keep everyone as informed as humanly possible. We will utilize email, Facebook and you can sign up for emergency SMS messaging via rainedout.com at the link below.

Link: www.rainedout.net/team_page.php?a=33b0725ae30a720a5bea

Mandatory Gear

A handheld drinking device, at a minimum, is required. A hydration pack is also a very wise option. For the 50-milers, a light is required. In the unlikely event of catastrophic damage to the course, gravel roads may be used. **Please come prepared with a safety vest in the event of our backup plan.**

Packet Pickup

Friday, July 24: 5-11:30 p.m. at Burr Oak Visitor's Center (1436 Highway 141, Coon Rapids, IA, 50058)

Saturday, July 25: 5-7 a.m. at River Campground (1314 Fig Ave., Coon Rapids, IA 50058)

Pre-Race Dinner

On Friday, we will have a simple pre-race pasta dinner. We strongly encourage you to come out and bring a food item to share with those around you and make some new friends, or catch up with those you may have lost touch with. The meal is free for the first 50 athletes who attend. Additional meals can be purchased on site for \$12.

Post Race

Please stay, recover and cheer on other runners until you are ready and able to safely drive home!

Race Day Information (Parking)

There is parking available for about 100 cars at the River Campground. Overflow parking will be one mile away at Star Field. Please carpool with other athletes if you are able.

Runner Safety

Please stay hydrated and pay attention to your surroundings. The River Campground Aid Station will be very busy with activity, especially between 5-7 a.m., Saturday, July 25. If you are coming into the aid station at this time please be alert!

Spectators/Crew

Please encourage your spectators/crew to stay at the River Campground Aid Station. This is the best place for them to see you multiple times during your race.

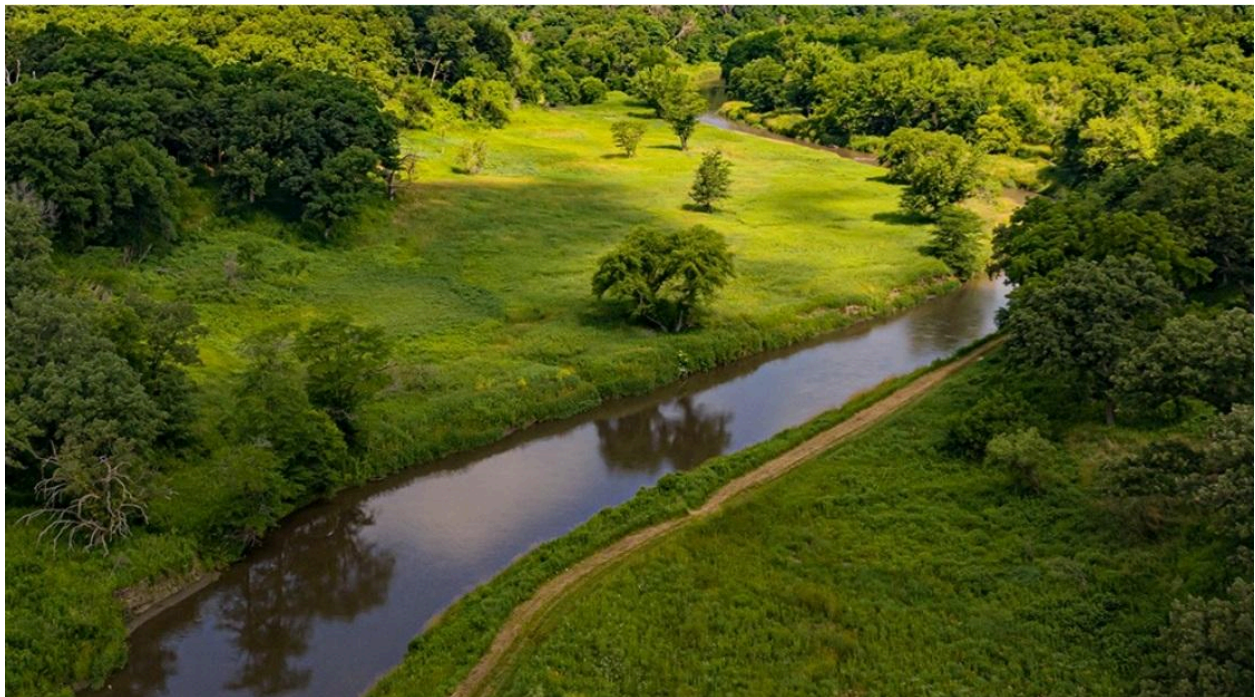
We love all animals, but for the safety of runners please leave your pets at home.

Switching Races Mid-Race

Due to the format of the race, you will not be able to drop to the 50K if you are running the 50-mile race.

Weather

Average temps for July 25 in Coon Rapids are 84/66. The course will be run in valleys near the Middle Raccoon River which could affect humidity and temps considerably. Sunrise is at 6:06 a.m. and sunset is at 8:43 p.m. local time. There will be a lot of insects. Please bring your preferred bug repellent and always be ready for rain.



TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATIONS

Driving Directions

Whiterock Ultra is about 1 hour from Des Moines, and 1.5 hours from Omaha, making it easily accessible for runners looking for a scenic race with an easy drive to and from.

Whiterock Conservancy
1314 Fig Avenue
Coon Rapids, IA 50058

From Des Moines: From the I35/I80, take exit 127 for Highway 141. Take 141 North until you reach Fig Ave [N56]. Turn left (south) on Fig Ave [N56] for two miles until you come to a bridge. Turn left (east) into the River Campground (start/finish) just before the bridge.

From I80 East: Take exit 60 onto US 71 N in Pymosa. Turn right onto US-71 N for 12.7 miles to IA 44 East. Turn right onto IA 44 East for 9.4 miles to Chestnut Road. Turn left (north) onto Chestnut Road for 13.8 miles and continue onto State Highway 73 for a little over 1 mile to IA-141 East. Turn right onto IA-141 E and follow signs for Whiterock Conservancy and the River Campground (start/finish).

From I80 West: Take exit 60 onto US 71 N in Pymosa. Turn left onto US-71 N for 12.7 miles to IA 44 East. Turn right onto IA 44 East for 9.4 miles to Chestnut Road. Turn left (north) onto Chestnut Road for 13.8 miles and continue onto State Highway 73 for a little over 1 mile to IA-141 East. Turn right onto IA-141 E and follow signs for Whiterock Conservancy and the River Campground (start/finish).

Accommodations

Whiterock offers a variety of overnight accommodations. There are cabins for rent, two bed and breakfasts within 15 minutes drive, or you can camp for a small fee onsite at the race start/finish line! Consider staying for the weekend to enjoy the park and spend time with your running friends.

There is plenty of room to camp at Whiterock. If all established sites are booked, we have options to get you an open space. You may just not have a fire ring and picnic table.

Additional lodging options are available about 30 minutes away in Manning, Carrol, Jefferson and Panora.

SPONSORS

Please consider supporting the sponsors of the Whiterock Ultra; they have been instrumental in helping us put on this event!

Hammer Nutrition Nutrition products/fuel	POET Local/community support	SILO Drop & gear bags
		
Whiterock Conservancy Use of trails/facilities		
		

...and that's it! See you at Whiterock!