

Fat A%% 50

1/5/08: There is no doubt that the course we have been using for the past three years has been the toughest since FA50 running's here in the Grand Valley began in the early '90s. From the Alford mansion by the East Entrance of the Monument the course takes neighborhood trails which connect to Andy's Loop to Little Park road. Up Little Park to a BLM 4wd road which connects to Billings Canyon Jeep Trail and down to the river. The large loop section (18.8mi) runs up West Bangs Canyon Trail to the Tabeguache, over to the Bangs Canyon staging area, down Billings Jeep Trail to the connector 4wd road and back to the beginning.

Due to our blazing speed, John Panozzo and I started at 5am with ski poles and headlights. It is a good thing we had the poles as I believe we would not have been able to stay upright without them. The weather turned warm the day before the run and snow was melting and turning to ice. In addition, a storm front moved in with high winds and occasional rain. It took us 3 ½ hours just to get to Billings Jeep Trail. There we observed Heath Hibbard of Ridgeway (who represented 50% of the remaining field) ease on heading for the river. After calculating our pace we decided to head straight up to the Staging Area, where Kim would be an aid station. She arrived as we did and we took the opportunity to dry out. Around 11:30am Heath arrived and was revived with refreshment and dry socks and mittens. He departed (perhaps not in a straight line) for an abbreviated return trip to the mansion. Two hours later, here came Lou, who clamped on to the solitary beer waiting in the cooler. That was it for the running. No one actually made the entire 33 mile distance. Heath came closest with about 30 miles, Lou Lorber next with 25.6 and John and I with a whopping 10 miles. Of course, greater hopes for next year!

Conrad