

## PARTICIPANT GUIDE

MAY 9, 2025 / OLD FORT, NC





# CONTENTS

<b>03</b> A Message From the Race Director	<b>10</b> Health Precautions	<b>18</b> Camp Grier Map and Lodging
<b>04</b> Race Information and Schedule	<b>11</b> Course Markings	<b>20</b> Local Amenities: Food, Gas, and Lodging
<b>05</b> Course Description	<b>12</b> Weather, Drop Bags, Live Tracking	<b>21</b> Race Supporters
<b>06</b> Rules and Regulations	<b>13</b> Swag and Awards	<b>26</b> Ultrarunning Study
<b>08</b> Pacers	<b>14</b> Course Map	<b>27</b> Race Partners
<b>09</b> Crew	<b>16</b> Aid Stations	
	<b>17</b> Crew Directions to Aid Stations	





## A MESSAGE FROM THE RACE DIRECTOR

Hellbender is an incredibly special race. Born from a love of these mountains, the course was designed to be challenging, humbling, and affirming. The Run828 Foundation, a nonprofit whose mission is to cultivate a welcoming community in Western North Carolina through the sport of running, created and supported this race, along with Aaron Saft, who worked hard to make it a success. Together, we created something special, and I am honored to carry the race forward for my third year as race director. We hope you enjoy our race and trails! They will take you to some beautiful places, but you will earn those views.

In September of 2024, Hurricane Helene upended life as we know it in Western North Carolina. Many of our classic trails are inaccessible or destroyed by landslides. Residents in our gateway communities have been devastated. Amongst this sadness, we are grateful to be able to bring you Hellbender on an alternate course, and humbled you have chosen us.

**CARRIE BARIS - RACE DIRECTOR**  
**RUN828 FOUNDATION BOARD - OLIVIA AFFUSO, ERICA BAREUTHER, CARRIE BARIS, SARAH GOLDMAN, TORY GRIEVES, CHARLIE KING, MATT MCELREATH, CRAIG PETERSON, KENDALL WEAVER**  
**BRANDON THROWER - CO-RACE DIRECTOR/ADVISOR**  
**BRIAN ATKINSON, KYLE JUDKINS - MEDICAL DIRECTORS**





# RACE INFORMATION & SCHEDULE

## LOCATION

Camp Grier  
985 Camp Grier Rd  
Old Fort, NC 28762

## START TIME

5:00 AM

## TIME LIMIT

39 Hours

## THURSDAY SCHEDULE

3:00 - 8:00pm - Packet Pick Up  
3:00 - 8:00pm - Lodging Check In  
5:00 - 6:00 PM - Mandatory Pre-Race  
Meeting at the Camp Grier Pavilion  
6:00 - 8:00pm - Pre-Race Meal at  
Hemlock Dining Room

## RACE DAY SCHEDULE

4:00am - Runner Check In/Gear Check  
4:45am - Pre-Race Talk  
5:00am - START!





"IT'S THE BEST COURSE  
ON THE EAST COAST,  
HANDS DOWN."  
-KARL MELTZER

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

along the ridgeline

The Hellbender Hundred course was heavily impacted by Hurricane Helene in September of 2024. With many of the trails along the original course still closed, we've worked super hard to bring you a course this year that still captures the spirit of the race with tons of vert and views. The 2025 version of what we are dubbing "The Hellenebender" begins at the picturesque Camp Grier in Old Fort, NC. From there, the route will take you over some of the highest mountains on the east coast and deep into the valleys below. The start and finish of the course is at 1,500 ft and the high point of the course is 5,408 ft atop Graybeard Mtn with a magnificent view of Mt Mitchell

and beyond! Expect lots of climbing with a few climbs of 3,000 ft or more. All together the course has ~20,000+ ft of elevation gain and ~20,000+ ft of descent. The terrain is classic East Coast, which is a mix of soft dirt and extremely technical rocks and roots. The course consists of 75.7 miles of trail, 15.4 miles of gravel, and 9.4 miles of pavement (most of that a closed greenway trail). A classic mountain course in the heart of Appalachia!

You can listen to a full course breakdown here: [Facing Vert Podcast](#)

For turn-by-turn directions, [Click Here](#)



# RULES & REGULATIONS

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*RUNNERS / PACERS / CREW*



**ALL RUNNERS, AS WELL AS THEIR PACERS AND CREWS, MUST ABIDE BY THE RULES AT ALL TIMES DURING THE EVENT. FAILURE TO ABIDE BY WILL RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION.**

1. Due to the unpredictable mountain weather on this course we will require all RUNNERS and PACERS to carry the following gear at ALL times for their safety. This includes: headlamp and red flashing back light (these must be worn during all nighttime road sections), back-up light and batteries, weather proof jacket (seam-sealed), emergency bivy (such as a S.O.L. emergency bivy, an emergency blanket does not count), insulating long sleeve base layer, warm hat and gloves, emergency whistle, calories, hydration carrier (40oz+), cell phone or Garmin inReach, and GPS unit provided by the race. We will have mandatory gear checks before race start, and multiple times during the race.
2. Poles are permissible.
3. Leave No Trace.
4. No cutting the course or switchbacks. If you deviate from the route, you must backtrack to the point at which you departed before continuing.
5. Check into and out of all aid stations.
6. Obey any race official request.
7. No muling from pacers.
8. Only one pacer at a time and no dropping your pacer on the course.
9. Crews are only allowed in designated areas.
10. Be courteous to other trail users.
11. In the event that you need to drop, please turn your bib in to the nearest aid station. Transportation will be provided back to the start/finish if needed.





# INTO THE BEAST



# PACERS

All pacers must abide by the rules set forth below:

1. One pacer per runner at a time.
2. Each pacer must sign a release form before participating.
3. Pacers must be 18 years of age or older.
4. Pacer bib must be visible at ALL times.
5. Pacers must check into and out of aid stations at the same time as their runner and pacers cannot be dropped on the course.
6. Pacers must stay within a 50 yard radius of the aid station when attending to their runner.
7. Pacers must stay with their runner at all times and must run the entire leg until the next crew access point or specifically allowed Aid Station, as there is generally no access for them in between.
8. Changing of pacers can only happen at crew accessible locations.
9. Pacers cannot "mule" any items for their runner.
10. Pacers must follow any and all rules that are set forth for runners, including all gear requirements.
11. Pacers have full access to all Aid Station amenities which includes food and drink.







## CREW

All crew members must abide by the rules set forth below:

1. A crew member is defined as a person who provides material support to a runner.
2. Crews can only meet and assist their runners at designated points on the course.
3. Crews must adhere to instructions of all aid station personnel or race officials.
4. Crew must stay within a 50 yard radius of the aid station while attending to their runner.
5. Crew will be limited to one vehicle.
6. Crews must obey ALL speed limits.
7. Crews must never park in a way to block traffic, trailheads, or other cars. All four wheels must be completely off the roadway.
8. Littering is STRICTLY prohibited!
9. Crews at Graphite Aid must not loiter before or after their runner arrives due to limited parking. Please follow the race tracking to estimate the best time to arrive to the aid station for each visit.
10. Failure to follow rules will result in the disqualification of your runner.





## **HEALTH PRECAUTION RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **ON ALLERGIES**

- We encourage anyone with an anaphylactic allergy to carry their own Epi Pens. The medical volunteers will have a handful of extra Epi Pens, but because of how long this race is, we may not be able to get to the athlete having an allergic reaction within a reasonable amount of time, and this could be a matter of life and death. Please consider bringing two Epi Pens to carry with you while running or volunteering.

### **ON PREVIOUS INJURIES AND MEDICAL CONDITIONS**

- We recommend everyone with injuries or pre-existing medical conditions to talk to their physicians prior to competing at the Hellbender 100.

We will have medical personnel located at Aid Stations to be ready to assist with any medical attention that is needed. We will also have Search and Rescue in place in the event of an emergency. Any relevant medical history for a runner should have been provided when you signed up for the race. We provide this information to our Medical Staff to have on hand throughout the course of the event.



# COURSE MARKINGS



The course will be marked with orange arrows posted in the ground at turns and major intersections along with orange pin flags with silver reflective tape added to both sides of the flag in the ground. Turns will have extra pin flags to denote the turn. After turns, expect to see confidence flags at least every 1/4 mile along the route to the next turn. X signs denote wrong way. Please DO NOT tamper with or remove course markings!





## WEATHER

Spring weather in Western North Carolina is extremely unpredictable. It could be very warm but snow has been recorded every month of the year in the Black Mountains. Also with the large elevation changes, temperature swings are often 15-30 degrees from the valleys to the top of the mountains. Fogged in conditions are common in the early mornings and you could experience severe pop-up thunderstorms in the

afternoon. The required gear is there for your safety in cases where you may need to hunker down during a storm or become immobile due to injury. In these conditions, hypothermia is a severe risk and is honestly the greatest threat to your health during the event. Do not take these mountains lightly, they will chew you up and spit you out. We go by the old adage, prepare for the worst, and hope for the best.



## DROP BAGS

All drop bags must be brought to the start of the race. Close your bag securely and label it with runner name, bib number, and aid station. Aid stations for drop bags are: Graphite, Long Gap, and Camp Grier. Bags may not be larger than the size of a small backpack. If you show up with a big plastic bin, duffel bag, or overly large bag, then we will not take it to the drop off point. You should have a bag that has room for one pair of shoes, a couple layers of clothing, and some nutrition. All drop bags will be returned to the Finish area after the Aid Station closes. This could be a long time after you finish the race. They will be available at Camp Grier under the pavilion through Sunday morning at 10am as well. Afterwards, leftover bags will be disposed of or donated.

## LIVE TRACKING

Live Tracking will be available for the race. At check-in, all runners will receive a GPS tracker that will need to be secured at the top of their pack. DO NOT stuff the tracker in the bottom of your pack or it will not transmit appropriately. Families and crew can follow their runners throughout the day by using the [Adventure Enablers](#) website. Please note that this website will be updated with race tracking information as we get closer to race day. Expect updates of runner location every 10-15 minutes during race day. Note, tracking will not be perfect, due to the topography of the area. Sometimes there might be significant delays in the transmission of runner location of up to an hour or more. Race officials will also be checking runners through aid stations manually as backup.





## SWAG AND AWARDS

All racers receive a swag bag with a shirt and other fun items, pre-race meal, and food and beverage at the finish line.

Finishers will receive a custom belt buckle.

Top three male and female will receive a handmade, locally crafted award.

Sub-24 hour runners will receive a custom painted wood cut from our local artist and 2022 1st place male Jonathan Ibach.

## CERTS AND QUALIFIERS

We are a Western States and Hardrock qualifier.

The course is certified by the ITRA - International Trail Running Association and is a UTMB® indexed race. Runners that complete the course within the time limit will receive index points towards UTMB® races.

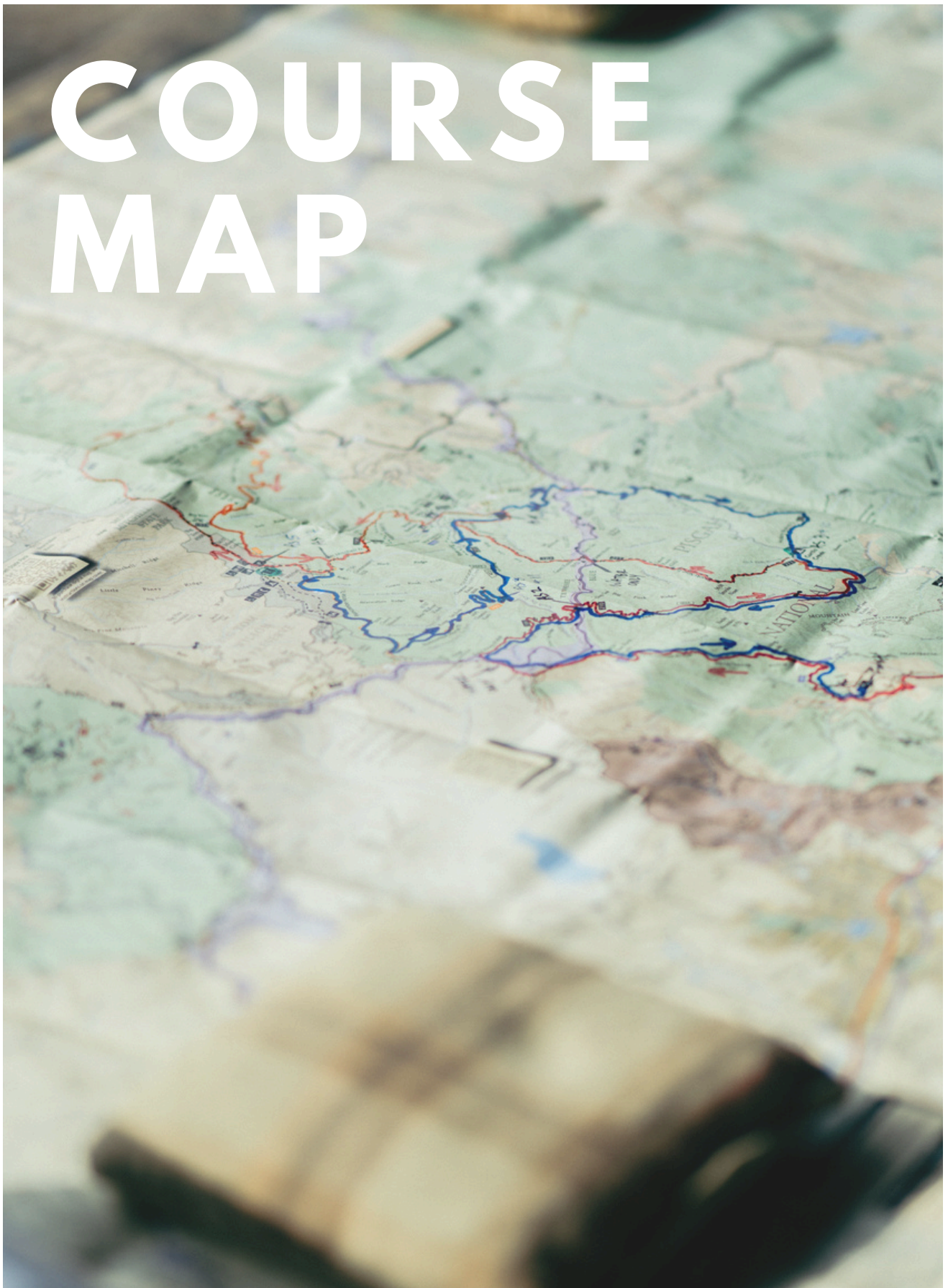
We are also Trail Sisters approved.



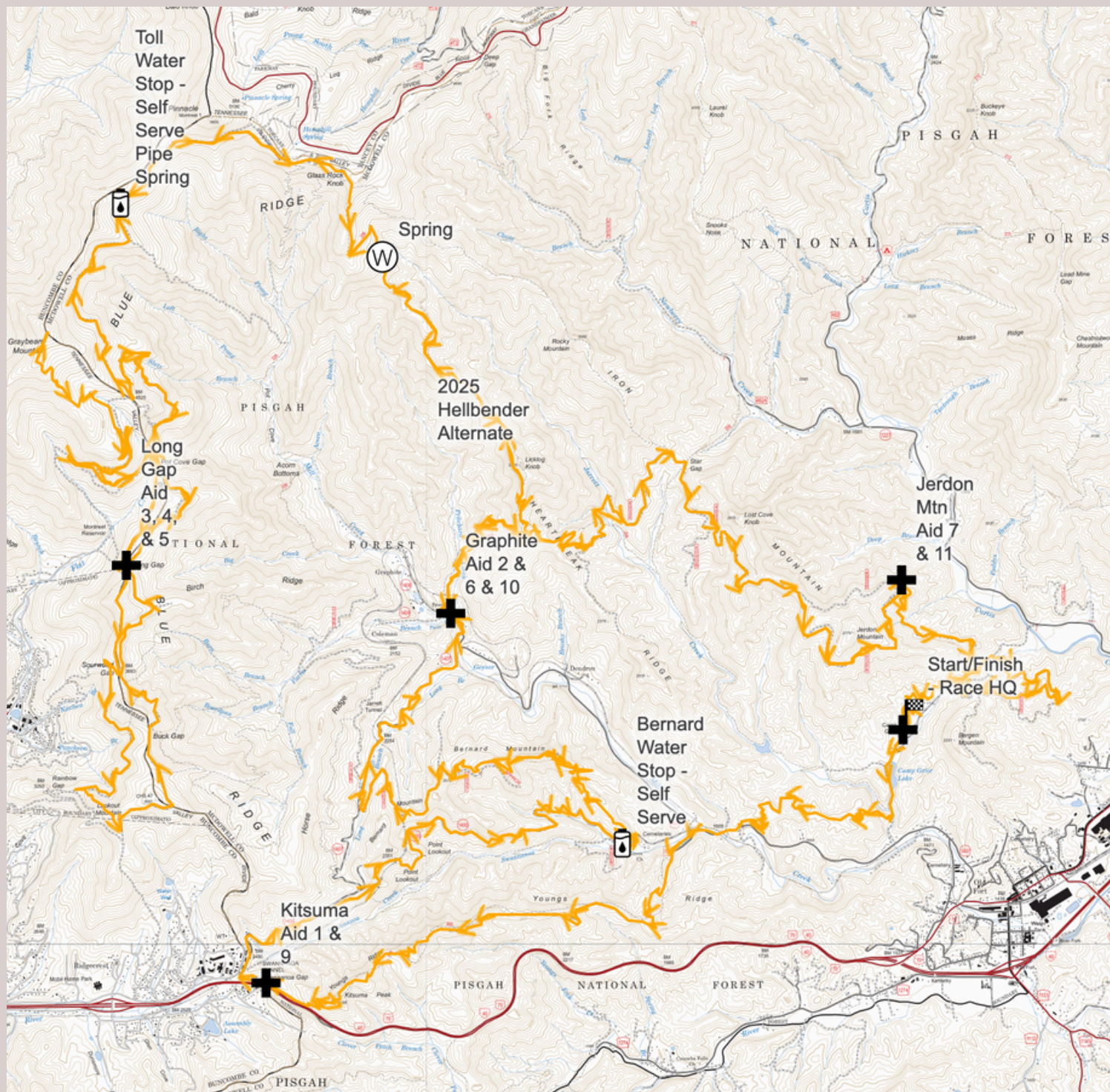
2026 QUALIFYING RACE



# COURSE MAP







GPX or KML race route download links for uploading into a GPS device are linked here: [Hellbender 100 GPS Files](#)



# AID STATIONS

Aid Stations and Distances				Support			Cutoffs	
Aid Station Location - See Crew Directions for GPS coordinates and detailed information	AID Stations (AS#) and Self Service Fluid Stops	Segment Distance	Total Dist	Drop Bag	Crew Access	Pacer Swap	Cut Off Hours - From 5:00 A.M. Start	Cut Off Time of Day
Start - Camp Grier			0.0	No	Yes	No		
Kitsuma 1	AS1	7.9	7.9	No	No	No		
Bernard Mtn 1	Fluids (Self Serve)	4.5	12.4	No	No	No		
Graphite 1	AS2	6.5	18.9	Yes	Yes	No	7.25	12:15 PM
Old Toll 1	Fluids (Self Serve)	7.2	25.0	No	No	No		
Long Gap 1	AS3	4.3	30.3	Yes	No	No		5:00 PM
Long Gap 2	AS4	8.2	38.5	Yes	No	No		
Long Gap 3	AS5	5.7	44.0	Yes	No	No	17.5	10:30 PM
Old Toll 2	Fluids (Self Serve)	4.3	49.3	No	No	No		
Graphite 2	AS6	7.2	55.4	Yes	Yes	Yes	21.75	2:45 AM
Jerdon Mtn 1	AS7	7.5	62.9	No	No	No		
Camp Grier	AS8	5.4	68.3	Yes	Yes	Yes	26.75	7:45 AM
Kitsuma 2	AS9	7.9	76.2	No	No	No	29.75	10:45 AM
Bernard Mtn 2	Fluids (Self Serve)	4.5	80.7	No	No	No		
Graphite 3	AS10	6.5	87.2	Yes	Yes	Yes	34	3:00 PM
Jerdon Mtn 2	AS11	7.5	94.7	No	No	No		
Finish Camp Grier		5.4	100.1		Yes		39:00	8:00 PM

## AID STATION FOOD WILL CONSIST OF, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO:

Skratch Hydration, Coke, Ginger Ale, Chips, PB&J Sandwiches, Pickles, Cookies, Bananas, Oranges, Pretzels, Candy, Boiled Potatoes, Avocados, Refried Bean Quesadillas, Broth. Most aid stations will have a variety of hot food options as well.

## CUTOFFS

All runners must leave each aid station before the posted cutoff time to continue in the race. If you reach or leave the aid stations below after the posted cutoff times, you will be pulled from the course and you will receive a DNF. The course has a 39 hour time limit.

**\*\*Portajons or toilets will be available at: Camp Grier, Kitsuma, and Graphite aid stations.**



## CREW DIRECTIONS TO AID STATIONS

There are a total of two crew-accessible aid station locations along the course visited multiple times.

Camp Grier

Start, mile 68.3, Finish

985 Camp Grier Rd, Old Fort, NC 28762 [campgrier.org](http://campgrier.org)

Crew Access - Yes

Drop Bag - Yes

GPS Coordinates 35.64308, -82.19450

To Aid Station @ Graphite- mile 18.9, mile 55.4, and mile 87.2. (Driving 5.3 Miles / 15 Minutes from Start)

Brookside Missionary Baptist Church, 126 Graphite Rd, Old Fort, NC 28762

The is a full service aid station

Crew Access - Yes

Drop Bag - Yes

Crew - Please park in Brookside Missionary Baptist Church Lot. Do not arrive more than 15 minutes before your runner is expected to arrive. Parking is limited.

Head South out of Camp Grier - 0.6 miles

Turn right on Old US 70 W - 1.5 miles

Turn right onto Mill Creek Rd - 2.5 miles

Turn right onto Graphite Rd - 0.1 miles

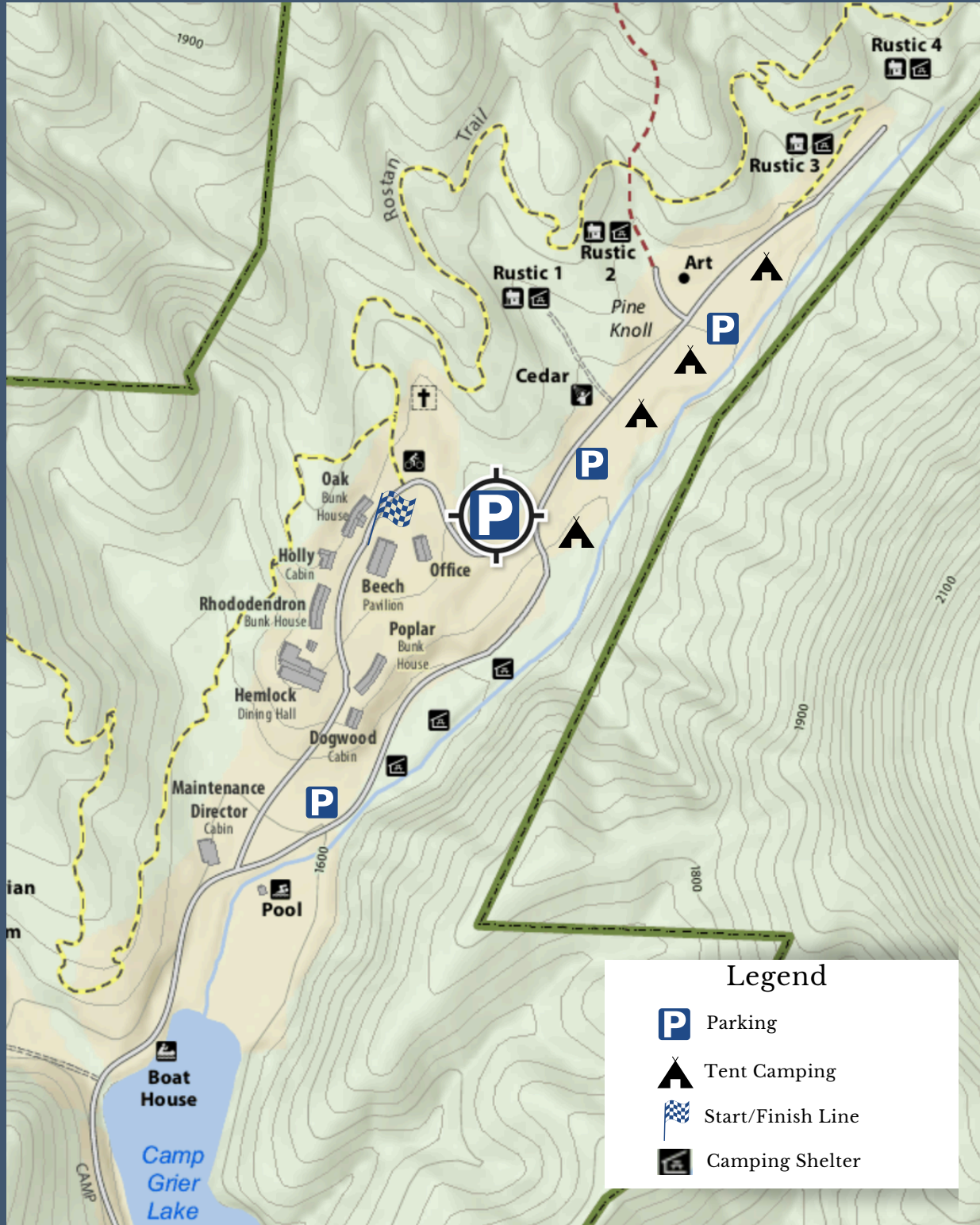
Turn right into Brookstone Missionary Baptist Church.

GPS Coordinates 35.65688, -82.24760



# CAMP GRIER MAP

Below you will find a map of the Camp Grier Property. As you enter the property off Old US 70W, drive up past the lake and follow signs to the main office. Main check-in will be under Beech Pavilion and race start will be adjacent to it between the Pavilion and Oak Bunkhouse. Main Parking will be near the office in a large gravel lot and secondary parking, once main lot is full, will be along the road between the pool and Art Building.



# LODGING AT CAMP GRIER

Old Fort, NC



The picturesque Camp Grier in Old Fort, NC is an incredible venue to host a race. Not only is it a gorgeous piece of property surrounded by national forest, with multiple trails accessing the USFS trail system, it includes a plethora of lodging options for your trip to the race. Private cabins, dorm-style rooms, hostile-style beds, and camping can all be had at Camp Grier. If you are looking to stay literally right by the start then you can register for lodging at this [link](#). Pre-race meal on Friday can also be reserved at the link above. Additionally, the [Jarrett Creek Cottage](#) is located right by the camp entrance if looking to rent a whole house for the weekend.

## LODGING OPTIONS

- Holly Cabin - sleeps 10, whole cabin  
- \$700/weekend
- Dogwood Cabin - sleeps 8, whole cabin  
- \$700/weekend
- Rhododendron Bunkhouse Room -  
5 bunk beds, common bath and kitchen  
- \$140/night
- Poplar Bunkhouse Room - 2 bunk beds,  
common bath and kitchen - \$120/night
- Oak Bunkhouse Room - 2 bunk beds,  
common bath and kitchen - \$120/night
- Rhododendron Bunkhouse Hostel Style  
Bunk - 1 bunk in room w/5 bunks -  
\$60/night
- Tent Camping - dispersed in field, no  
hookups - \$25 person/per night





A photograph of two trail runners, a man in a blue shirt and a woman in an orange shirt, running on a dirt path through a wooded area. The man is in the foreground, and the woman is slightly behind him. The path is surrounded by trees and foliage.

# AMENITIES

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FOOD / GAS / LODGING

## FOOD

### [Hillman Beer Old Fort](#)

78 Catawba Ave, Old Fort, NC 28762

### [Seeker Coffee](#)

39 Catawba Ave, Old Fort, NC 28762

### [Black Beary's Cafe](#)

14 W Main St, Old Fort, NC 28762

### [Gogo's Cinnamon Rolls](#)

212 E Main St, Old Fort, NC 28762

## GAS

### [Shell](#)

570 Bat Cave Rd, Old Fort, NC 28762

### [Sunoco Gas Station](#)

570 Bat Cave Rd, Old Fort, NC 28762

## HOTELS & LODGING

### [Camp Grier](#) - reserve on [ultrasignup](#)

985 Camp Grier Rd  
Old Fort, NC 28762

### [Inn on Mill Creek](#)

3895 Mill Creek Rd  
Old Fort, NC 28762

### [Indigo Nature Retreat](#)

1037 Newberry Creek Rd  
Old Fort, NC 28762

### [Quality Inn](#)

585 NC-9, Black Mountain, NC  
28711

### [Hampton Inn Black Mountain](#)

306 Black Mountain Ave, Black  
Mountain, NC 28711

### [Hampton Inn Marion](#)

3560 US 221 S  
Marion, NC 28752

### [Holiday Inn Express Marion](#)

279 Kadire Dr  
Marion, NC 28752

### [The Monte Vista Hotel](#)

208 W State St, Black Mountain,  
NC, 28711

[Destination McDowell](#)



## THE NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAIN TRAIL RUNNERS

The [North Carolina Mountain Trail Runners \(NCMTR\)](#) is dedicated to advocating for our trails, maintaining our trails, and bringing together our trail running community through club events. NCMTR is supported by the [RUN828 Foundation](#).







## G5 TRAIL COLLECTIVE

We'd like to extend our thanks to the [G5 Trail Collective](#) for all of their hard work and dedication on the trails in the Grandfather District. Headed up by Camp Grier, this non-profit works in conjunction with the USFS, local communities and also with recreational user groups to help maintain and develop new trail projects. Learn more about their current and future projects and see how you can help today!





# NC HIGH PEAKS TRAIL ASSOCIATION

We'd like to extend our thanks to the NC High Peaks Trail Association for all of their hard work and dedication on the trails in the Black Mountains. The Association is engaged with our community leading hikes, maintaining and building trails, cleaning over-looks and scenic by-ways and working to improve the quality of our outdoor recreation assets. They are partners with the Blue Ridge Parkway, Pisgah National Forest (Appalachian Ranger District), Mount Mitchell State Park, Carolina Mountain Club, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail.





# MONTREAT WILDERNESS

In 2004, Montreat Conference Center placed approximately 2,460 acres of pristine wilderness under a conservation easement. This land is now permanently protected from development and is known as the Montreat Wilderness. The Montreat Wilderness joins local mountain preserves and several thousand acres of private land in preserving the wildness and unique ecology of the entire region. By protecting this land we think of the many generations to come who will have the gift of experiencing Montreat's nature, unperturbed by our changing world.



# MILL CREEK WILDLIFE CLUB

We'd like to extend our thanks to the Mill Creek Wildlife Club for allowing our race to pass through their amazing property in the Mill Creek Valley. The Mill Creek Wildlife Club has been incredible stewards of this property for multiple decades, championing the conservation of land and watersheds. Access through their property creates invaluable links to the National Forest and Montreat Wilderness.



# ULTRARUNNING RESEARCH STUDY OPPORTUNITY!

Interested in advancing the science of ultrarunning? Join a doctoral research study exploring the connection between psychological flexibility and the flow state in ultra-endurance runners. Your participation can help uncover valuable insights to enhance mental strategies for ultrarunners.

## Who can participate?

- Aged 18 or older
- Registered for an ultramarathon race before June 1st , 2025
- Willing to complete two short surveys—one before and one after your race

## How to join:

Scan the QR code below or visit this [link](#) to complete the pre-race survey!



After your race, you'll receive an email reminder to complete the post-race survey. As a thank-you, participants who complete both surveys will be entered into a drawing to win a \$20 gift card to The Feed. Your insights matter—thank you for contributing to this exciting research!

Contact Marisa Romeo, Principal Investigator, at [mromeo@students.uws.edu](mailto:mromeo@students.uws.edu) with any questions.

IRB #0001188

# A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

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VICTOR DOSTROW, MD

We want to extend a special thanks to Abby Harris for the inspiration and template design of this amazing participant guide, which saved us hours in the creation of this guide for our runners.