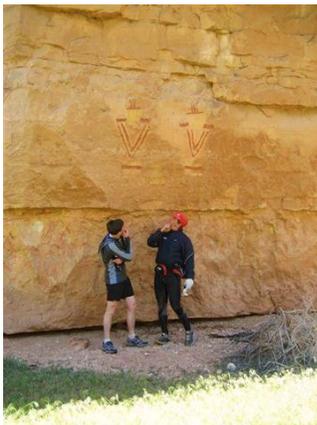


This past October marked the **10th year** of NATRA. We have come a long way since that first email and group run. The defining moment of our 10 years came this past March when, in their inaugural issue devoted to trail running, **Runner's World** named Soulstice one of the top 32 trail races in the country (out of well over 2000 trail races). How did Soulstice rise to this level? Well, they dubbed it "the best post-race party anywhere". Soulstice's success continues to thrive with the amazing support of the **Pay n'Take, Aspen Sports**, our one and only **David McKee's** artistry and of course our participants and volunteers absolute devotion to this race and the causes it supports.



Group Runs are still the core of NATRA and we continued to host them every Saturday (except race/special event days). We also initiated what promises to be a yearly adventure run. At the end of April, 18 NATRA runners ran 13.1 miles while marveling at the ancient paintings on the walls of **Snake Gulch** on the Kaibab Plateau.

Races Supported/Clock and Photography: Sedona Marathon, Run for the Mountain, Sacred Mountain Prayer Run, Run for Life, Gaspin in the Aspen, Four on the Fourth, Team Run Flagstaff Snowbowl Climb, Team Run Flagstaff 24 Hour Run on Heritage Square, Soldiers Trail Run, Run for the Magic, Flagstaff Marathon, Go Big For Parkinsons, Flagstaff Sports Foundation races, and finally the Turkey Predictor run.

Trail Maintenance: In July, eight NATRA runners donated 40 hours to helping reconstruct the Schultz Fire devastated **Little Elden Trail**. NATRA partnered with Flagstaff Biking Organization and donated \$250 that helped feed over 60 hard working volunteers. In October, as part of **Make a Difference Day**, 10 NATRA runners helped clean up yet another proposed stretch of the **Flagstaff Urban Trail System** and helped with documentation of 1000 year old petroglyphs on the walls of the Rio De Flag.



For the third straight year, **NATRA.org** had over 30,000 hits. Early in the year the site **surpassed 200,000 hits** since we launched the web site in February 2002. The Flagstaff Trail Running web site became more popular than ever, **exceeding 10,000 hits** for the first time!

Fundraising Efforts: Donations of Soulstice guaranteed entries, NATRA SweatVac Gear, and event sponsorship reached new heights with over **\$8000 raised for various causes**. These included Girls on the Run SoleMates; Run for the Mountain Shirt Sponsor; Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flagstaff (10 Soulstice Spots and gear raised over \$5,000); Running on the Rez Documentary (3 spots have raised \$750); Sally Meyerhoff Foundation 5K Run; Bowl for Kid's Sake Lane Sponsor; BBBSF Golf Tournament Hole Sponsor; Big Night Out; RAGBRAI Illinois MS Foundation Bike Ride; Flagstaff Biking Organization/Arizona Trail Maintenance.

SweatVac Gear: A special thanks to SweatVac for allowing several of our races a group discount. When race directors from the Flagstaff Marathon, Gaspin in the Aspen, Soulstice and Big Brothers Big Sisters collectively ordered over 1500 shirts, SweatVac agreed to make their top of the line gear affordable for the events. Their race shirts and head gear are second to none and their dye sublimation process makes their race shirts the most colorful and comfortable of any t-shirt around. Remember, these shirts retail for \$28 making your race fee nearly worth the shirt alone!

Soulstice: As many of you know, the Soulstice Mountain Trail race provides the extra income that NATRA puts entirely back into the running community. While many have asked me to petition the Forest Service to make the race larger, I have resisted taking that path. The limited number makes the race that much more special. What other race charges long course runners less for their entry fee? Most notable this year: Sara Wagner pulled out a last second victory to become Soulstice's first five time winner!



Facebook: NATRA is all about social networking from the group runs to sharing information. This past month, NATRA received its 600th like on Facebook. Facebook has proven to be an invaluable resource. Since it is an open forum runners, race directors and anyone who "Likes" the page or joins the group can freely share information about Flagstaff trail running and their own events.

High Country Runner Column: The Arizona Daily Sun has continued to support the High Country Runner Column. Thanks to my many of you who have submitted articles and especially Sara Wagner who has helped edit mine. We profiled three "anonymous" runners this year and if you have ideas for more let me know!



Thanks to **Salomon Sports** and **Virtual Roster** for their generous support of all of our events. Salomon gave the Flagstaff Summer Running Series 40 pairs of their newest trail running shoes (more than \$5000 retail) and \$2000 to help support chip timing at the Series races. Gail Hughes of Virtual Roster and her leap into chip timing took the professionalism of our local races to new heights. This has ensured that our races are fun, professional and sustainable. Besides, it has greatly freed up my time to get back to running!



Salomon Flagstaff Mountain Trail Championship: By having the fastest times at all three races, Janice Hill and David Lyons won free 2012 entry into Gaspin in the Aspen, Flagstaff Marathon and Soulstice Mountain Trail run.



Flagstaff Summer Running Series: For the 7th straight year coordinated the 6 race series. Just under 3000 runners registered for all races. Congratulations to Sara Wagner and Chris Gomez on their Open Division victories and to John Bogen and Grace White-Daly on winning the Master's titles. Thanks to **AVDomotics** for their donation of two home sound systems. Remarkable to note was that **women far out participated men in the Series, 57 to 43%!!!**

It has been a fantastic ten years and I want to thank everyone who has either participated in a group run, race, helped at a race or volunteered for trail maintenance or Flagstaff Urban Trail System cleanup day. We are all helping make Flagstaff a better and healthier community. Happy Holidays and cheers to 2012! (Oh yeah....don't forget to register for the Soulstice Lottery on January 1st on VirtualRoster.com!!!!). For your enjoyment I have put together a collection of my favorite running photos from 2011. **Check it out at natra.org!**

Happy Trails! Neil W.