

Folks, our October 8th Soulstice “Prairie” Run is 8 days away, and because of forest closures forcing us westward, it is **CRITICAL** you read these instructions to prepare yourself for the week ahead! **At this point, there are no refunds, deferrals, or exchanges – Simply put, DO NOT GIVE AWAY YOUR RACE BIB. I overbooked Soulstice to take as many runners as possible in the lottery this year, so please do not ask me to fill your spot with another runner or ask to get a friend into the race.** If you cannot make the race, know that your entry fee **supports Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flagstaff mentoring programs.** Thanks to the Williams News, we had great local coverage about the move to the north of Parks. Check it out at <https://bit.ly/3f7jkf8>



**One important update: I had to make a last-second modification on the course that will shorten it slightly to 6 and 11 miles, the same distances as our traditional races. I fully expect most runners to finish at least 10 minutes faster than on the old courses.**

**Double Check Your Race Distance/Start Time:** Please visit

<https://runsignup.com/Race/RegistrationLookup/?raceId=95421> and confirm your race course and starting time. We have an early 7 AM start for short and long course runners who wish to participate non-competitively. This way you can do Soulstice, enjoy the post-race party and raffle longer, and it still counts towards your legacy status. If you wish to switch from any race, just let me know, but switching to the short course is a \$20 donation to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flagstaff payable at packet pick-up **unless you are a Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flagstaff fundraiser. Email me as soon as possible at [natralc2017@gmail.com](mailto:natralc2017@gmail.com).**

**Packet Pick Up:** We have **four bib/race shirt pick-up times.** If you are local, please try to do one of the three early ones; Wednesday 10/5 at the Run Flagstaff store from 3 to 6:00 PM, 204-A East Route 66; Thursday 10/6 at Aspen Sports, 15 North San Francisco St; or Friday Oct. 7th at the Pay n’ Take from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. located at 12 West Aspen. On race day, you can do so from 6:15 – 7:30 a.m. on Sat, Oct. 8th at the staging area.

**Aspen Sports Raffle Tickets:** To speed up the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flagstaff raffle ticket purchases, if at all possible, **PLEASE HAVE A CHECK TO BBBSF for the amount of raffle tickets you wish to buy.** Each runner gets a free ticket, but to increase your chances, you can purchase tickets for **\$5 apiece, 5 for \$20, and really increase your chances at 15 for \$50 or 35 for \$100.** You can also purchase more raffle tickets on race day. If you are coming in from out of town, check out [www.flagstaffarizona.org](http://www.flagstaffarizona.org) or call (888) 788-FLAG for information on lodging and other things to do in and around Flagstaff.

**COVID Mindfulness:** For our indoor packet pickups, we have spread them across 4 days to reduce densities. We will have plenty of hand sanitizer around port-a-potties and on food handling tables. This year’s new course on relatively flat forest roads offers you plenty of room for social distancing. During our post-race party food and beverages will be spread out, and our volunteers will be serving with food handling gloves. **Biff’s Bagels** will be available, however, please use provided food handling gloves. **During the raffle, please be mindful of your social distancing. Some may want to consider wearing masks.**

**AID STATIONS:** 5K (Aspen Sports Turnaround), 6 mile Start/Finish Staging Area (Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flagstaff), 8.7 Mile (NATRA). Aid Station will have water and gatorade only. ***Please be prepared to carry your own favorite energy gels or any other items that you like.***

**SAFETY PLAN:** A Guardian Medical ambulance will be staged at the Start/Finish staging area at the junction of Forest Road 81 and 107. Mountain Bike medics will be staged first near the westward turn on the out and back portion. Later in the race, they will then move to the 8.7 mile aid station on the long course. *In the event we have severe weather on Saturday, our permit allows the race to be held Sunday.*

**Race Times: 7 AM: Early Starters; 7:45 Klostermeyer Kid's Kilo; 8 AM Regular Race.**

**Chip Timing by Run Flagstaff:** Even though we are using chip timing, **please make sure your bib is on your front and visible to radio operators, photographers and our spotters!** Thanks to Run Flagstaff, race times and standings will have a live link at

<https://www.athlinks.com/event/54889/results/Event/1031497/Results>

**Carpooling:** While we highly encourage carpooling with friends, please do so being mindful and safe with regards to COVID. Due to the added challenges and changes we are asking everyone to embrace this year to make Soulstice a success, ALL participants will get a race poster.

**Directions and Parking:** Drive to the Parks Exit (178) on I-40. On the off ramp from Flagstaff make a right (north) or if driving from points west make a left on the off ramp, and then make a right just past the Parks Gas Station. Follow 66 east (construction zone - GO SLOW!!!) about 0.9 miles and then make a left onto Government Prairie Road (Forest Road 107). Drive north on FR107 3.5 miles and **pull up behind the car ahead of you and please park as far off the road as possible!!!!** For those using Google Maps - here is the link: <https://goo.gl/maps/fs65r2n4ve26usXC6>; The earlier you arrive, the less you will have to walk to the staging area at the junction of Forest Road 107 and FR 81. The start/finish line is 0.1 miles east of the staging area. Because of logistics and the post-race party located off course, we will not have the usual coffee and bagels at the staging area. Please be prepared with your own pre-race breakfast and coffee. You can either warm up on the course or keep warm in your vehicles until about 7:40 AM when we will gather to move to the starting line to cheer on the Kid's Dashers at 7:45 AM. When that is over, we will start the main event.

**The Race Courses:** This year all runners will do the first 6 miles together - an out and back to the start-finish line. 11-mile runners will bypass the finish line and run counterclockwise around the large cinder cone, aka, "The Government Prairie vent". For maps, Strava links, and downloadable gpx files visit <https://runsignup.com/Race/AZ/Parks/SoulsticeMountainTrailRun> and scroll down to the course maps section. On all maps, **the slight modification** means that the start/finish line is on the road bend to the west of the current position, about halfway closer to the staging/parking area.

**Course Markings:** All major turns will have either course marshals, AND/OR white flour arrows. Because we will be running in pastures with cattle, we will have marshals at the gates that need to be opened. Please keep an eye on the cows, especially the bulls. I have spent a ton of time running and biking the prairie and they have looked at my oddly, but none have charged, just be aware of their presence. If they do charge, you can easily outrun them! We will also have a mountain bike sweep (**Thank you Mark Gullo**) who will follow the last runner once they have passed through the gate at the 4-mile mark. Because we will have ham radio operators, course marshals and three aid stations, you should almost always see a support volunteer on the horizon! **PAY ATTENTION to the course markings at all times, NOT THE RUNNER IN FRONT OF YOU!!!!**

**DOGS: No dogs are allowed on the race course.** If you bring a dog to the race staging area, I cannot emphasize this enough - make sure it is LEASHED. Our event is monitored by Forest Service personnel and there are hefty fines for unleashed dogs in developed recreation areas. Also, you are welcome to bring your dog to the post-race party, just remember to have your pooch leashed and to have a bag to pick up any poop!

**Race Etiquette: IF YOU LISTEN TO MUSIC, PLEASE HAVE ONE EAR OPEN SO YOU CAN HEAR IF SOMEONE WISHES TO PASS.**

**Post-Race Party/Aspen Sports Raffle:** This year the post-race party will be held at a private ranch owned by two NATRA runners located about 1 mile south of the course. After you have crossed the finish line and rehydrate you can either stay and cheer runners on, or you can drive south about 0.8 miles to the forest boundary, parking either in the large disturbed area on both sides of Forest Road 107 at the boundary fence. If that area is full, pull up behind the last cars lined up on the east side (left side) of the road only. From there it is a short 0.4 mile walk south to the post-race party that will be signed with Soulstice pin flags on the left side of the road. **Please bring warm clothing and a chair to hang out and enjoy the party.** The party will get rolling with live music by my pal Paul Webber around 9:30 AM. At approximately 10:00 AM, we will start the short course awards, followed by more live music. Around 10:30 AM we will start the long course awards. We will periodically draw raffle prizes, and then have more music to enjoy after the long course awards. Please plan to stick around, enjoy the breathtaking views and even take a short hike up to the top of Klostermeyer Hill for the most magnificent views of the San Francisco Peaks you will have ever seen!

Our post-race party hosts Selena and Jeremiah need help coming up with a name for their new white Labrador puppy. As a result, in addition to the raffle, we will have a bin set up to take suggestions. We will award a special Soulstice prize as judged by Selena and Jeremiah.

**Fratellis Pizza Party:** To finish off your Saturday, we will also provide *Fratellis* pizza starting at 6 p.m at the Pay 'N Take as a thank you to sponsors, runners, and especially our volunteers! If you have any questions before race day, e-mail me at [natrallc2017@gmail.com](mailto:natrallc2017@gmail.com).



Finally, while Soulstice is annually held in memory of my mom Jackie who unexpectedly died shortly after Soulstice 2014, this year we will honor the memory of Scotty Miller who recently passed on to the next world. Our hearts go out to his family and many of whom will be in attendance. One of the original owners of one of our long-time sponsors, the Pay 'N Take, Scotty voluntarily organized the post-race party and was a huge supporter of all things Soulstice. So, in honor of Scotty, we are going to party the way he would want us to.... like it was Flagstaff, 1999. See you at packet pick-up.

Best, Neil W.