

Half Marathon Written Course Description

Participants will complete the 13.1-mile race course once.

Start/Finish (Boat Ramp) to Skunk Hollow – 1.5 Miles

- Start/Finish in the gravel parking lot adjacent to the asphalt Boat Ramp parking lot.
- Run west out of the parking lot along the gravel road.
- Bear right at the “Y”, taking the gravel road up to the asphalt road, turn right and follow the asphalt road clockwise back down and through the Boat Ramp parking lot, west through the gravel lot and the Start/Finish line, and run west out of the parking lot along the gravel road again.
- Back at the “Y” in the road 0.2 miles from the Start/Finish line, bear LEFT this time.
- Enter opening in cable fence next to covered picnic table, turning right onto the Mt. Carbon Loop Trail.
- Follow the Mt. Carbon Loop Trail west as it ducks in and out of the trees, keeping the Bear Creek on your left side.
- You will pass several gravel parking lots, port-a-potties, a wet river crossing and a steel footbridge. (Do not take the bridge and continue west along the north side of the Bear Creek.)
- Bear right at the Horse Crossing sign, ascending up to the gravel shoulder of the asphalt park road.
- Stay on the gravel shoulder as it bears left over a narrow concrete foot bridge paralleling the road, and reaches the south side of Bear Creek.

Enjoy this first section of the course and the babble of the Bear Creek as you climb gently upstream for the first 1.5 miles of the race course.

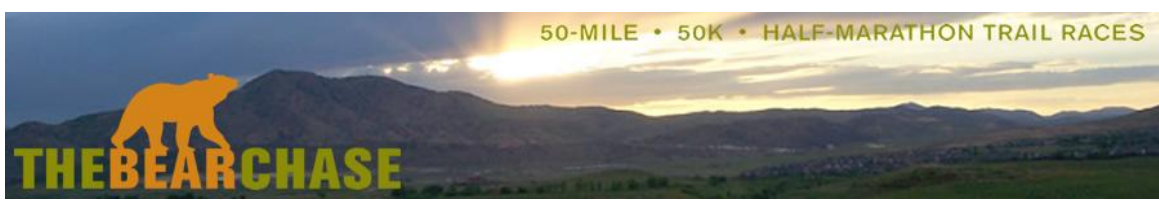
Skunk Hollow to Aid Station #1 (Pelican Point) – 1.7 Miles

- Immediately after crossing the concrete foot bridge, bear left down a short decline and go east through the entry in split-rail fence onto the hiker-only Owl Trail, keeping the Bear Creek on your left side.
- Bear left at the “Owl 3” post. (Do not turn right on the trail to the Visitor Center.)
- Continue east past bridge and exit the Owl Trail through the split rail fence opening, onto the crusher-fine Fitness Trail.
- Follow the Fitness Trail straight for 0.15 miles, past a “No Horses” sign.
- Immediately after passing a marsh on the left side of trail, turn hard left onto the singletrack Cottonwood Trail.
- Bear left at the next “Y” in trail, crossing two short, wood bridges.
- Exit the trees as the Cottonwood Trail turns south and away from the Bear Creek, and cross another short, wood bridge that leads to a “Y” in the trail.
- Bear left at the “Y” following the single track east along the edge of the Bear Creek Lake, all the way out to the tip of the peninsula at Pelican Point, and the first aid station.

The beautiful canopy of trees will keep you in the shade as the race course winds through heavily wooded areas before popping out into an open meadow. This section also has lots of twists and turns, so stay on your toes!

Aid Station #1 (Pelican Point) to Turtle Pond – 1.2 Miles

- Leaving the aid station and Pelican Point, run south on the singletrack that hugs the edge of Bear Creek Lake for 0.10 miles before leaving the shoreline and turning west.
- Bear left at the next trail merger just before immediately turning hard left at a second 4-way trail intersection, and run down to the Turkey Creek.
- Do not cross the Turkey Creek and bear right onto the singletrack, keeping the Turkey Creek on your left side.
- At the next trail intersection, bear left and continue west on the Mt. Carbon Loop Trail as it goes uphill.
- At the top of the incline, bear left at the “Y” onto the wide Cowen Trail (staying on the south side of the asphalt park road), where it shoots back downhill to the Turkey Creek.
- Continue south on the Cowen Trail, keeping the Turkey Creek on your left side and the open meadow on your right.



- Turn left on concrete bike path, cross the steel bridge and take your first possible left turn back onto the singletrack.
- Now running north with the Turkey Creek still on your left side, bear left at the first “Y” in the trail, and follow the trail as it takes a sharp right and continues to Turtle Pond.

This section of the course has a few sharp ups and downs to test you, but your efforts will be rewarded with some amazing views of the foothills just west of the park.

Turtle Pond to Aid Station #2 (Fox Hollow G.C.) – 3.4 Miles

- Arriving at the south edge of Turtle Pond, bear left at the “Y” and follow the narrow singletrack along the west side of the pond.
- At the north end of Turtle Pond, bear left at the “Y” and continue along the south side of the Turkey Creek.
- Bear left at the next trail intersection while keeping the Turkey Creek on your left side, and rejoin the Mt. Carbon Loop Trail that heads east along the south side of Bear Creek Lake towards Mt. Carbon. (Do not take either of the two river crossings to the north side of the Turkey Creek; one wet and one wood bridge.)
- Nearing the base of Mt. Carbon, bear right at “Y” to stay on the Mt. Carbon Loop Trail and do not take the singletrack Fisherman’s Trail. Cross the dirt Cowen Trail and asphalt bike path, staying on Mt. Carbon Loop trail as it turns right and ascends steeply.
- Make the short but steep climb up to summit of Mt. Carbon, pass picnic tables, restrooms and the Homestead Golf Course on your right, and descend the singletrack Mt. Carbon Loop Trail east.
- Descending with the split-rail fence on your left side, arrive at an intersection with asphalt and concrete bike paths. Look for the continuation of the narrow singletrack that bisects the two bike paths and continue to the golf course maintenance building.
- Nearing the maintenance building, bear right across the concrete bike path and pick up the singletrack Stone House Trail, passing a “Three River Crossings Ahead” sign.
- Passing the maintenance building on your left side, run east along the Stone House Trail as it parallels Fox Hollow Golf Course, and then wade through the Bear Creek three separate times. Just after the last water crossing, make a 180-degree hard left U-turn around the split-rail fence, onto the concrete Bear Creek Trail bike path.
- Keeping Fox Hollow Golf Course on your left, run north on the concrete bike path for next 0.30 miles up to the aid station at top of bike path.

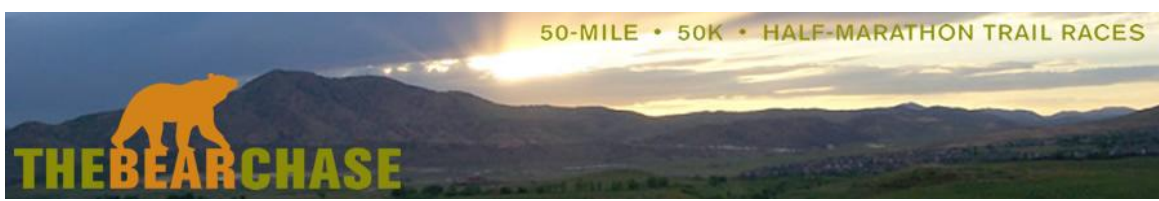
From Turtle Pond, take note of Mt. Carbon off to the east as you snake your way towards it. It’s a short but steep climb, and you’ll be rewarded with amazing panoramic views of both the mountains behind you to the west and downtown Denver to the east. Then enjoy bombing down the switchbacks on the east side of Mt. Carbon during a fun 2-mile descent back into the woods, before getting your tootsies wet in the three wet river crossings of Bear Creek. Following the third crossing, the concrete bike path will help squeegee your shoes as you get ready for the “back nine” of the race course.

Aid Station #3 (Fox Hollow G.C.) to Aid Station #4 (Cattail Creek) – 2.3 Miles

- Exiting the aid station, turn west on the north sidewalk of Fox Hollow Lane and bear right onto the singletrack trail at the large steel gate, following it west as it parallels Morrison Road.
- The singletrack climbs and then joins an irrigation ditch for next 1.0 miles, before intersecting with a metal gate at Morrison Road. Go left past the gate and then right at the Bear Creek Lake Park sign onto North Park Trail, which parallels Morrison Road. (Do not make hard left U-turn around the irrigation ditch.)
- Continue along the singletrack for 0.18 miles to the west side of Cattail Creek gully and Aid Station #4.

This section starts out with a steady incline, followed by a few short rollers past Fox Hollow Golf Course before dipping below street level and flattening out along an irrigation ditch.

Aid Station #4 (Cattail Creek) to Start/Finish (Boat Ramp) – 2.4 Miles



- Leaving the aid station and Morrison Road, follow the trail south, staying parallel to the Cattail Creek gully on your left side.
- As the gully and trail bend right, turn right onto unmarked singletrack trail and head back uphill towards the sandstone rock formations of Red Rocks Amphitheatre. (Do not go to or past the Horse Crossing sign.)
- Climb for 0.27 miles through an opening in the barbed-wire fence before turning left and descending back down to Morrison Road, rejoining the North Park Trail. Run southwest, keeping the barbed wire fence on left and Morrison Road on right.
- North Park Trail leaves Morrison Road, turns left past a metal gate and U-turns left through an opening in the barbed wire fence, heading back northeast into the open field.
- Follow the doubletrack trail for 0.69 miles, and turn right onto the wood bridge to cross a ditch. (Again, do not go to or past the Horse Crossing sign, but this time from other direction.)
- Immediately after the wood bridge, turn left before bearing right at "Y" in trail, turning southeast away from the ditch and Horse Crossing sign.
- Run downhill with Cattail Creek gully on your left and the Coyote Crossing covered picnic pavilion on your right, before merging with a gravel park road.
- Merge left onto the gravel road and descend steeply through the metal gate, turn left onto the asphalt park road and follow it clockwise down through the Boat Ramp parking lot, and then run west to the gravel lot and the Start/Finish line.

The most exposed section of the race course provides some tremendous views of the mountains, Red Rocks, and Bear Creek Lake Park. And remember that what goes up must come down as your final half-mile will be a speedy descent back to Bear Creek Lake and the finish line!