



Sunday April 21st, 2013

RE: 2013 Zumbro Endurance Run Volunteer Thank You

Dear Friends (also known as volunteers),

We came, we got snowed on, we got rained on, we got sleeted on, we leaned into a biting wind and with smiles on our faces and mud on our shoes, together we wallowed in the muck and the mire. We were not in a battle with mother nature, there were no winners and losers, it was what it was and we accepted it for that. This Spring has been highly unusual, many of the runners that came from out of state said, "we looked at the pictures on the website from last year, we thought it would be nice and dry" - well usually it is, but not this year, not anywhere! As a small group of us met on the Wednesday prior to the race to start marking the course, I looked at a couple of the guys... "I hope we are still friends after this." That is part of race-directing, you have to rely heavily on friends (giving freely of their time) and if they are good, efficient and reliable you go back to them again and again because you know you can trust them, you know they will get the job done (to those individuals who are at almost every race, I send a special thank you). You ask them to mark miles of muddy, wet trails, 36 degrees and raining all day. You stick them in the woods for two days straight, to work an aid station in the middle of nowhere. At times it gets hard, it gets cold, you get tired and just like running a tough race, you wonder why. Our volunteers are mostly runners, most of them quite good, our volunteers are eternally optimistic and positive through all. Our volunteers are givers, they just get it. A friend of mine said very simply awhile back, "I got wet before and I always dried off" - that thinking personifies the attitude of our volunteers - optimism, the glass is always half full and very little rattles them. You all know the personal importance of training for, competing in and finishing a race and come race day, as volunteers you do everything in your power to help others safely do the same and that does not go unnoticed. Minnesota ultras and trail-races (as a result of our volunteers) have a reputation of having some of the best organized races with the best volunteers anywhere in the country - this is not just hyperbole, it is a known fact. I can only say so much so I will leave you with the words from a grateful runner who sent me an email after this years race which speaks directly to your dedication and selflessness.

*"Dear John and all the amazing volunteers,*

*Although I've run many races over the years, Zumbro 50 2013, will go down in the record books as one of the most memorable and rewarding races I've ever done. Traversing the snow, ice, mud and standing water was a challenge, and despite my moments of extreme pain and frustration, at the end of the day, I had a blast and was renewed in my love for all things trail.*

*I was in awe of the volunteers who were outside in the freezing cold, happily being bossed around by scores of exhausted, hungry, possibly crabby runners for hours on end. This is a testament to how special the trail runners' community is. Dozens of volunteers spent their entire weekend selflessly helping others (often strangers) reach their goals without any expectations for compensation or glory. Each time I saw an aid stations ahead, I felt a wave of gratitude and joy. It felt like every volunteer was my own personal crew member and fan. This was especially helpful considering the aid stations were inaccessible by my usual crew of family members.*

*The course conditions made the race very difficult, but that just made finishing more rewarding. Ultras give me the opportunity to push myself beyond what I ever thought was physically or mentally possible. But, more importantly, they remind me of the goodness of people and the strength of a community focused on a common goal. I'm proud to be an ultra trail runner. I couldn't be one without the support of race directors and volunteers who make this dream a reality. Thank you for everything you do! - Sincerely, Megan"*

As always, if you have any questions, comments, concerns, suggestions, compliments or complaints, please feel free to drop me a line.

Sincerely,

John Storkamp / Race Director