

Dear ##F,

This is the third Race Update for the Ancient Oaks 100-Mile Endurance Run, which will take place this coming Saturday morning, December 16, in the Enchanted Forest Nature Sanctuary in Titusville, Florida with a race start time of 7:00 AM Eastern Daylight Time. There will likely be one final Race Update sent out Thursday evening, but this Update should answer all your questions. If it doesn't, please reply with your question and I'll do my best to get you an answer ;-).

Here's an exhaustive list of information, in no particular order – it's your responsibility to know the stuff that follows. Ignorance is no excuse from this point on ;-).

This Update, all the prior race updates, the Waivers, and all other race information is – or will be – posted at the race website location, which is as follows:

<http://mcmtiming.com/ancient-oaks/>

Check there before emailing or calling – chances are the answer to your question is there.

RACE LOCATION

The race takes place in the Enchanted Forest Nature Sanctuary, a Brevard County park located at:

444 Columbia Boulevard, Titusville, Florida 32780

Each year someone misses the start because she (usually it's a woman ;-)) doesn't take the time to check out the park's location before race morning. Make sure you know where you're going! It's not hard to find!

RACE CHECK-IN

There will be race check-in both at the pre-race dinner, which will be at the IHOP restaurant on Cheney Hwy (just west of exit 215 off I-95), from 3:00 PM until 7:00 PM on Friday evening December 15, and on Saturday morning before the race starts. Make sure to check in with plenty of time to get situated before the race starts. You get a t-shirt, a race number, and you need to sign the waivers - that's the extent of check-in. It's not complicated, but we've got to get about 60 of you ready to go by race start time.

There is NO requirement to check in on Friday night – about half the field checks in Saturday morning. Consequently, if you all arrive at 6:45 AM Saturday morning to check in, some of you will end up missing the race start, so if you're arriving Saturday morning, be there early enough to not miss the race start – we WILL start on time!

Friday evening, I will be leaving the restaurant promptly at 7:00 PM – please don't arrive at 6:55 PM and hope to get checked in ;-). There's plenty of last-minute stuff to get done so the pre-race meeting will end at 7 PM.

WAIVERS

PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU CANNOT RUN WITHOUT SIGNING BOTH WAIVERS! We have TWO separate waivers of liability (thank county government bureaucracy for this duplication of effort) and they are posted to the race website location – please download them, print them, sign them, and bring them with you to the race. They'll also be available both the night before the race and throughout the duration of the race. EVERYONE WHO RUNS MUST SIGN BOTH WAIVERS - ALL RUNNERS AND ALL PACERS AND/OR SUPPORT PERSONS! There will be no exceptions to this rule! Essentially, anyone who leaves the parking lot area and goes onto the course with you needs to sign the waivers.

PRE-RACE DINNER

There will be a pre-race dinner at the IHOP restaurant in Titusville Friday afternoon from 3:00 PM until 7:00 PM. The IHOP is located at 3755 Cheney Hwy (SR 50) Titusville FL 32780 (telephone 321-269-4480). It's part of the Days Inn hotel, which is located about a tenth of a mile west of Exit 215 at I-95, where most of the motels are located. You can order off the menu, and pay individually for your meals.

We've got a back room set aside for us, so when you come into the restaurant, just tell the hostess that you're here for the race check-in. I expect about 20 to 40 people to show up and eat, so you'll have a chance to mingle with many of your fellow ultrarunners.

HOTELS/ACCOMODATIONS

There are PLENTY of cheap hotels in the area of the race – just Google any hotel website for Titusville, Florida and you'll find gobs of options. The best choices will be located at Exit 215 off I-95, which is called Hwy 50 or the Cheney Highway. All of those places are the same place ;-). I will be staying at the Quality Inn there from Thursday evening until late Sunday evening race weekend. If you're paying more than about \$80 for a room, you should be getting some luxury for it ;-).

The Quality Inn had agreed to offer AO100 runners a reduced price for rooms, but that offer expired on November 30. At that point, only three or four rooms had been reserved by runners, so apparently it wasn't that great an offer ;-). Regardless, there are plenty of hotel options for you!

I don't know of any local camping facilities, but there is a 24-hour Wal-Mart Supercenter located near I-95 and they are usually pretty good about allowing RVs to park overnight

in their parking lot. You might want to do an internet search for camping options if you're interested in that. There is also both a Lowe's and a Home Depot store located in the area in case you need something more substantial than what Wal-Mart stocks ;-).

REMEMBER THAT THERE IS NO CAMPING IN THE PARK - NOR ARE ANY TENTS ALLOWED TO BE SET UP AT THE RACE SITE! AND NO RECREATIONAL VEHICLES (RVs) ALLOWED!

VOLUNTEERS

We have several people who have graciously volunteered to donate part of a day, a whole day, or a whole weekend of their lives to us and the race. DO NOT abuse the volunteers! If you have ANY issues, then bring them to me at the timing tent. I'll be there for the duration of the entire race, with the exception of about a 45-minute nap around 4:00 AM. I may also need to spend an hour or so on the course checking on equipment and such. Otherwise I'll be in the timing area.

RACE TIMING AND SCORING

You will need to wear your race bib number clearly visible on your front, at all times. There will be a timing chip on the back of your race bib – please do not fold, spindle, or mutilate your race bib! There will be timing mats located at various points around the course, so please do NOT avoid them!

This year, there will be intermediate split points connected to the start/finish line so that your race progress will be live and online trackable by friends and family from anywhere in the world. The link to online results will be posted on the race website at:

<http://mcmtiming.com/ancient-oaks/>

as well as at:

www.ultratimingpros.com

NOTE: There will be one timing point at the back of the course, in the twisting single-track section called the Magnolia Loop. There will be two orange cones located a few feet before this small timing mat to warn you that you're fast approaching it. Please watch for it – thanks!

There will be a flat-panel 'scoreboard' display that will show you at a glance where you are in the race (how many laps and miles) as well as how long the last lap took you to run, along with some other miscellaneous information.

Please do NOT linger in the timing area - pass across the timing mat and then proceed on to the aid station. Do not retrace your steps backwards across the mat - we don't want to have to fix your miscounted loops, and the software is programmed to ignore loops that are suspiciously too short ;-).

Results will be updated online and onsite in near-real-time, and they will be posted to UltraSignUp once the race is finished.

Bib numbers will be assigned randomly – I'm using bibs left over from past races.

RACE CUTOFF TIME

The race will end at 3:00 PM on Sunday afternoon, for a total race time of 32 hours. The Cutoff Time is FIRM! Only finish times of 31:59:59 or faster will be considered finishes.

You are free to leave the premises at any time, but if you decide to drop out of the race for some reason, you must report to the timing tent and let us know you have decided not to continue.

A suggestion: If you're thinking of dropping out for some reason, take some time to recover and reconsider before taking final action. My Rule of Thumb is to take 60 minutes of rest before dropping out of a race, because in that hour you might find that you feel differently than you did earlier, and you find the will and the way to continue on. There's no downside in sitting on the sidelines for an hour before dropping out, and there's considerable upside if it allows you to regroup and get back out and finish the race.

For example - in four of my five finishes at Ancient Oaks, I've taken naps ranging from 60 minutes to three hours, and then gotten back up and finished the race, and twice I got back up and finished fairly strongly. So if you consider dropping, don't do so lightly.

Pacers are allowed for the entire duration of the race, although because the race is 29 loops of a 3.46-mile course, you'll see the other runners plenty of times, and will often find someone to run with. My suggestion is to use a pacer only during the late-night portion of the race, when your vision may be compromised and fatigue will be a factor.

Remember that this is a 100-mile race - 29 loops of a 3.46-mile course for a total of 100.34 miles. NO CREDIT will be given for any intermediate distance - anything less than a 100-mile finish will be listed as a DNF, although each person's final mileage will be displayed in the results, no matter how many miles are completed.

There are no cash prizes, awards, swag or anything else of value given to those who finish. You get a hearty 'Attaboy!' or 'Attagirl!', a hand-made finisher's award, and the satisfaction of having done something significant on your weekend time off ;-). There may or may not be any special awards presented, and if there is anything like this, it is entirely at the whims of race management and personnel ;-).

If you are running for a belt buckle, then you should not run, but instead you should enter and run one of the other 140-plus 100-mile races that offer buckles. Ancient Oaks has never offered a buckle, and there are no plans to do so in future years. AO is old-skool and will stay that way ;-).

PARK WILDLIFE

The park is home to the full array of Florida wildlife, including spiders, snakes, raccoons, armadillos, gopher tortoises, and most importantly, feral hogs. These hogs can be as large as 200 pounds or more, and are most active during the nighttime hours. They root around in the soil and often some sections of the course are significantly churned up by their efforts. They should not bother you, but it's best to give them a wide berth. I'd avoid getting between a mother and her piglets, for example ;-). Armadillos will also be actively rustling around in the leaves at night.

In the last year or so, the Golden Orb spiders have become much more visible – their webs are both beautiful and intricate. The Golden Orb spider is as small in size as a quarter, and can be as large as the palm of your hand. They're not aggressive and I don't believe they bite – but I'd avoid getting tangled in a web just the same ;-).

PARK RULES

As guests in the park, we must abide by the park rules, and here are the ones that will apply to us.

First, there is NO camping in the park - no tents, and no Recreational Vehicles allowed. There's just not enough room in the park and parking lot areas to accommodate anything more than passenger vehicles. All vehicles must fit into a normal-sized parking space! Shade-type canopies are allowed – as long as they're not larger than 10x10 feet. There will be at least one popup 10x10 tents set up covering some of the picnic tables just past the start/finish and aid station, and you are free to utilize both the picnic tables as well as the tents, for shade.

If you leave any supplies in the picnic area, remember that the park is home to lots of wildlife – much of which would LOVE to peruse your supplies and sample whatever's in

your kit! Use coolers with snap lids and plastic buckets or bins with snap lids for the best protection against critter theft.

Second, of course there's no littering at all in the park - please carry any trash you have to the aid station or deposit it in the trash cans located around the park. If you can carry it out onto the trail, you can darn well carry it back off the trail.

The same thing goes in the parking lot and aid station area – make sure your area is cleaned up before you leave.

Third, the park will be OPEN to the public on Saturday and Sunday during the bulk of each day. DO NOT run over or knock down any hikers or lollygaggers who are meandering around aimlessly while you're hell-bent on knocking off a big PR ;-). Please be polite to the people you meet in the woods ;-).

The issue with the park and its rules is that the land that the park encompasses is pristine old-growth natural Florida forest, and as such it's protected under the Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program. In fact, the park is billed as the 'flagship property' under the EEL program. There is a contingent of very active environmental activists who feel strongly that ANY human impact within the park should be strongly discouraged, and these people feel that the race should not be allowed in the park at all. We presently have the support of the Brevard County Board of County Commissioners, but it would take just one incident for much of that support to evaporate. Please be considerate of the park and the race and act accordingly!

The park front entrance gate will be locked after hours, but we'll have the combination and if you need to exit the park (or you have people who need to enter), have them get in touch with me on my cell phone at 772-349-1704, and we'll have a volunteer escort you out or escort them in. We've had issues with non-race-related people trying to get into the park after hours, so we need to respect the need for security. It's about a half-mile or less from the start/finish aid station area up to the front gate.

The visitor's center bathrooms are large, sanitary, clean, and WARM (during the chill of the night!) and they will be available for our use for the entire duration of the race. Please keep them clean, and please report any issues (like a lack of paper!) to the aid station personnel.

Once the sun goes down, and the park management goes home, it gets a little easier for us. But please be aware that whatever happens during the night better be cleaned up and gone by sunrise on Sunday morning, when the park management will return.

ALCOHOL

This section is new this year - but it's high time we had this discussion ;-). If you choose to bring alcohol or other adult beverages into the park, please use common sense and don't make a big deal about it. Red solo cups are a fine way to imbibe without it being as obvious as a beer bottle or can, or a large bottle of spirits prominently displayed in your area. Although I'm a non-drinker (and have been for more than 30 years), I have no issues with responsible use of alcohol. HOWEVER - I DO have a problem with IRRESPONSIBLE use of adult beverages.

PLEASE do not become drunk or inebriated during your stay in the park - your enjoyment should not infringe on other runners' ability to run the race. Please DO NOT use alcohol as a rehydration solution - I'm not going to look kindly on a runner who's slamming a beer each time he or she comes through the start/finish area.

ANYONE NOT ABIDING BY THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF ALCOHOL WILL PROMPTLY BE ESCORTED OUT OF THE PARK AND WILL BE DISQUALIFIED FROM THE RACE!

Be smart, people!

SAND

One of the things that surprises people every year is how much sand there is on the course – it's not deep, but it can be soft and there's a lot of it at various places along the course. The sand is very fine – it will get into your shoes even if you use gaiters. It just

seeps right through the mesh of your shoes, where it becomes like sandpaper and grinds your feet and toes relentlessly. Stopping to check your shoes more often than less often is probably a smart race strategy.

Sand may well affect your skin underneath your ankle timing strap, so check there as well. Clean skin is less likely to chafe or become irritated!

ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

Electric outlets get to be a premium commodity as the day goes along. Please do NOT ask the aid station personnel to charge your phone, mp3 player, ipod or ipad. The electrical connection is limited, and we have occasionally overloaded the circuit and have had to reset the breaker. There is a large screen room located next to the visitor's center, on the aid station side of the building. I'll have an electrical cord with a long string of outlets attached to it in there, so that's where you should go for a charging station.

WEATHER

The temperature during the race will vary widely, so plan accordingly. Daytime temperatures will probably be in the 60-80 degree F range, but could be lower or even up into the low to mid 90s. Nighttime temperatures could be very low, with the possibility of below-freezing temperatures. Florida's nighttime is also damp, and often windy, so a temperature of 38 degrees F with a cold north wind blowing will chill you to the bone quickly. Do not underestimate either the heat of the afternoon or the chill of the night ;-)!

Rain is always a possibility, but not likely. In the past six years, it has rained lightly at various times, and has rained more substantially only once. I'd plan on a dry race, but have some rain gear available just in case.

Also remember that we're running close to the shortest day of the year – so the sun will set early and rise late. Plan on it being dark by 5:30 PM or so, and plan on it staying dark until close to 7:00 AM Sunday morning. Any moonlight will make the visibility much better – under a full moon, a headlamp is often not necessary.

CREW/SUPPORT OPTIONS

You are encouraged to crew yourself out of your vehicle, which you will pass 28 times during the race, since each race loop begins by passing through the parking area. While we will provide a variety of food and some liquids, you should assume that you will receive nothing except access to clean water during the race. Whatever else you want, you should bring with you!

There are several picnic tables located near the start/finish area which will be available for runner use, and you're free to set up a small table and/or chair near your vehicle. Just remember that the park is home to lots of wildlife, which is looking forward to scavenging through your race supplies while you're out on the race course ;-).

PACERS

You're free to have a pacer for any part of the race you wish, although with 50 people running 29 loops each, you'll be within sight of someone else for much of the race. If you think you'd like a pacer after dark, please talk to race personnel and we might be able to find someone for you. No guarantees, of course! Make sure to have any pacer sign both park waivers before accompanying you onto the race course.

AID STATION

The aid station will be located at the Start/Finish area, and will probably be stocked with water, ice, cookies, pretzels, chips, some candy, peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches, and Gatorade. We're making plans to have grilled cheese sandwiches and hot soup and possibly coffee after dark, and there may also be pizza sometime before midnight. Although these are our plans, nothing is certain until race day ;-).

AGAIN, DO NOT COUNT ON FINDING ANYTHING AT THE AID STATION! Anything we provide should be viewed as a bonus ;-)!

My advice is - if you want something to be there, bring it yourself. If you absolutely cannot run without your fair-trade, free-range, no-kill soy latte with organic whip cream, then you'd best be bringing that with you. Do NOT depend on us to provide you with ANYTHING except access to clean water and bathrooms. We're working on having a well-stocked aid station but I would count on nothing ;-).

Someone asked about the availability of hot water, and about using a camp cook stove to heat water. That's fine – just use common sense. Don't be obvious about using it, don't put it in the grass and start a wildfire – you get the point – lol ;-). We will have hot water at the aid station, especially overnight, and it should be accessible at all times since we plan on keeping it warm in thermos-style bottles.

What I'd like to avoid is having stuff that leaves a trace – a couple of years ago, one of the runners and crew used a metal fire pit during the night, and when they left in the morning, they just dumped the ashes out on the parking lot asphalt. I saw it and did my best to clean it up, but the park manager still pointed out the stain mark the ashes left, and he was unhappy with knowing that a fire had been present in the park.

So use common sense out there ;-).

SALT

Remember to monitor your salt level during the day. The best way to do this is to taste salty foods such as pretzels – if they taste REALLY good, chances are you're a bit low on salt ;-). There will be Succeed S caps at the aid station for your use. These are packed with loads of salt – one of these should do you for a couple of hours, unless it gets really hot. Please be careful with the salt – if you overdo it and take in too much, the only way to correct that is to guzzle large amounts of water to dilute the overconcentration of salt. Unless it's really hot, if you stick to eating salty foods – and there will be some salty choices at the aid station – you should be fine.

It's easy to correct a low sodium imbalance – one S-Cap will do it. It can be VERY difficult to correct a high sodium imbalance – you need GALLONS of water pushed through your system to lower your sodium level. My advice is to err on the side of caution.

In my opinion – and I'm not a doctor, nor do I play one on TV – high sodium levels lead to nausea and make it difficult for you to take in ANY nutrition, which then leads to an energy bonk. One way to take in sodium is to simply eat salty foods – and pretty much anything you buy in a store is already loaded with salt ;-).

SUNSCREEN

Sunscreen should be in your race supply bag, especially if you're not from the south. The sun load can be big during the day, even though there's lots of shade on the course. Bug spray might also be useful at some times of the day – dusk and dawn in particular. Some kind of lubricant should also be in your arsenal – chafing is a big problem when it's warm and sunny.

MEDICAL ISSUES

Please run within the limits of your ability. If you are having a medical issue, please report it immediately. Remember that if you are having an emergency, you need to call 9-1-1 as soon as possible or have someone call for you. Paramedics are located within two miles of the race site, so they should be readily available. There are at least one doctor and at least one nurse running, so it's possible these people might be available to help, but again, plan on calling 9-1-1 if you have any medical issue that would require skilled help. We reserve the right to remove you from the course and the park at any time if we deem that you are a danger to yourself or to others.

NOTE: We will NOT be offering any type of anti-inflammatory over-the-counter pain relievers this year. We prefer not to encourage use of such pain relievers, as overuse can become a medical issue. If you want Advil, Aleve, or aspirin you should bring it yourself.

DOGS AND CHILDREN

A couple of people have asked about bringing a leashed dog to the race, and according to park regulations, dogs are prohibited in the park. Also, the liability insurance policy I purchase for the race prohibits dogs at the event, so unfortunately, Fido should stay home (or visit doggie day care) this weekend.

Although this is primarily an adult event ;-), children are welcome in the park and at the race – with ONE proviso. You MUST supervise any children at ALL times – we will NOT be providing babysitting services. Simply letting children fend for themselves in the park is not an acceptable option either ;-). So maybe it's best to have the kids watch Fido at doggie day care, or have Fido hang with the kids at Nana's house this weekend.

DONATIONS

Since many people have asked, if you'd like to contribute to race expenses, I'll be paying for all supplies and race expenses such as liability insurance, aid station stuff, race numbers, and the like. There will be a donation jar located on one of the aid station tables if you're so inclined, or you can make a donation through Paypal – my

Paypal account is mcmelton57@gmail.com .. Please do NOT feel as if you need to contribute ANYTHING. THIS IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY ON YOUR PART - IT IS NOT A REQUIREMENT TO RUN THE RACE!

I'm happy that you've decided to spend a few days of your life with us here in sunny south-central Florida ;-), and I'm looking forward to having a GREAT time this coming weekend!

LAST-MINUTE SUPPLIES

If you arrive and realize you've forgotten something, there is a 24-hour Wal-Mart Supercenter located at the northeast corner of the intersection of I-95 and Hwy 50 at Exit 215, and there's a Lowe's as well as a Home Depot and a drug store at the same Exit. Any of those stores should have what you need. There's a gas station/convenience store located less than a mile from the park entrance as well.

SATURDAY MORNING PRE-RACE BREAKFAST

If you're thinking you want a last-minute carbo-loading feast before the race, there are two 24-hour restaurants located at Exit 215 off I-95 and Hwy 50 - one is a Denny's (located in the Ramada Inn) and the other is an IHOP (located at the Days Inn). If you're staying in the Days Inn, they'll offer you discount coupons for use at the IHOP at the time you check into your room.

RACE START TIME

A couple of you have asked what time the race starts - according to the race website www.ancientoaks100.com, the race will begin promptly at 7:00 AM Eastern

Daylight Savings Time. There's been nothing to change that, so plan on starting at 7:00 AM on the dot!

TARPS/CANOPIES

I would prefer that you NOT bring a popup tent or canopy with you to the race - if the start/finish begins to look too much like Occupy Wall Street, we'll get in hot water with the park personnel ;-)! There will be three popup tents at the start/finish area that will have some space for your gear - one is the timing tent, which I'd prefer to have limited access to, the second will be the aid station tent and there will be one more popup located in the picnic area right next to the aid station. You may use either the aid station or the picnic popup as covered space for your things - but please use common sense and use only the minimum space necessary so that others may have room as well.

PARK ACCESS

The park will be open on Friday from 9:00 AM until 5:00 PM, and I will be in the park from 9:00 AM until about 2:00 PM, marking the race course and doing final race prep. After that, I'll be at the pre-race dinner.

Saturday morning I'm planning on opening the park gates about 4:00 AM, so you should have plenty of time to get into the park and set up before the race begins at 7:00 AM. Some of the parking lot will be roped off – please do not park in this area. That's the area that the public will use while the race is going on. We are allowed to park on the west side of the parking area, and in the large open space just before the paved parking area – this would be on your left as you drive into the park. I'll try and have it clearly marked as Race Parking.

If for some reason you will not be at the start of the race at 7:00 AM, but you're still planning on running (maybe you're giving the other runners a head start ;-)) please check in at the Timing Tent before you start the race. I need to know that you are starting the race, and I need to make sure I know exactly when you started.

You are not required to remain in the park at all times during the race – you're free to leave if you need something outside the park, and then return and continue running. If you need to leave the park boundaries for some reason, please tell someone at either the Aid Station or the Timing Tent that you are leaving (check out with us), and then tell us when you get back into the park (check back in with us). That way we don't start looking for you in the weeds and the canals ;-).

POST-RACE CLEANUP OPTIONS

I will be staying at the Quality Inn from Thursday evening December 14 until late Sunday evening December 17. I have the room on Saturday night December 16, and since I will be at the race site from about 4:00 AM on Saturday morning until about 6:00 PM Sunday evening, my room will be available for use by anyone on Saturday night, Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon. So if you absolutely need a nap or a hot shower after the race, the room will be available on a first-come first-served basis. I'll have a couple of room keys at the brown popup timing tent located across the path from the aid station – just stop by and get the key. Please remember to bring it back when you're done using the room – and please don't steal any towels or leave any mess that I would be embarrassed to have to deal with ;-). My standards are pretty low, but I do have standards ;-).

Please do not attempt to drive home after running all night without any sleep – I want each of you to run the race again in future years!

FUN

Although this is an ultramarathon in every sense of the word, and we take your efforts very seriously, I'd like to emphasize that we intend to have a lot of FUN this weekend! Although both the Disco Glitter Ball and the South Park boxer shorts have gone AWOL, the Superman Action Figure, the fairy wand, and the small white Michael Jackson gloves will be on-site, and there will probably be some unusual prizes awarded, based on the whims of the race staff. We will attempt to not offend anyone, and we will

probably fail in that attempt ;-). Allow us some grace to be human ;-), and we'll do the same!

I have no last-minute words of wisdom for you ;-). Although there is no easy 100-mile race, the mere fact that I finished this race five years in a row means that the finish line is attainable for each and every runner who starts this race. You CAN finish this race!

Thank you for coming to run Ancient Oaks, thank you for your patience, and I look forward to watching you cross the finish line in the Enchanted Forest Nature Sanctuary next weekend!

Sincerely,

Mike Melton
Race Director
mike@mcmelton.com
772-349-1704 cell