



Thursday July 10th, 2014

**TO: All Afton Trail Run Volunteers**

Dear Friends,

When compared to the other events I am involved with, the Afton Trail Run will always have a special place in my heart - it was the first event I took on and it's where I learned the ropes of being a race director with the help of the previous RD, my friend Scott Wagner. Almost everyone that came to help my first year at the helm, has helped every year since - that is simply incredible. What is the deeper meaning of this, the broader implication? This event, its labor and its success is not just mine but yours as well. This years race witnessed 140 volunteers coming together to mark trail, unload and stock supplies, food and equipment and efficiently manage packet pickup, aid stations, medical, communications, photography, timing, the finish line, the post race picnic, sweeping the course and getting cleaned up and loaded out - it was simply impressive to watch and humbling to be a part of.

In each of these letters over the past couple of years I have made a point to include some feedback or a testimonial from a racer or two and will continue to do so as I feel this is the best measure of how we have performed as a team and paints a vivid picture of what this race means to people. Please enjoy the words of one of our awesome runners, knowing that you were once again an integral and indispensable part of Afton Trail Run.

*"This is a letter to let you know how profound of an impact the Afton Trail Run had upon my life this past Saturday. I don't know why, but there are exceptional people in this state. I saw this first-hand last weekend at Afton. I was drawn to signing up for this race because I had heard that it is a very well run outfit. Of course, I was also drawn to the challenge of the hills. I trained for this, my first ultra, while still in veterinary school and my time was challenged. I was nervous coming into the weekend, but I had a handful of runs in the high teens and low 20s on which to hang my hat. It was 8 miles longer than I had ever run before. I ran the best I ever had on Saturday. I set my A, B and C goals and made my A goal of going sub 6:30! I only had one small bad patch. In fact, I had never run long enough to experience coming out of a bad patch. However, if it wasn't for your selfless volunteers and well-organized and stocked aid stations, I wouldn't have had the day that I did. I appreciate the leadership that you have brought to these races. The overall outcome is also a reflection of who you are as a person. So, I want to thank you for what you have done and the experience you gave all of us. I also want to thank anyone in your life not directly visible, those possibly in the background but who are supportive of what you do. I can never turn back now and I want to run many, many more of these in my lifetime. Actually, I feel a little sad and it feels like a little like a hangover. I didn't want the experience to end. I knew that there were good people here in this state. I met so many of them on Saturday. I will miss the mountains and the grandeur of the west always, but I truly do have a home here in Minnesota. Thank you for the warm welcome. I had a blast! See you at the Superior races, I signed up to volunteer months ago. ~ Carson*

These races are ultimately put on for fun, but I take the responsibility very seriously - we plan meticulously to put on the safest events possible while providing the best experience to those that choose to register for, travel to and participate in our events. As volunteers, should you ever have any comments; concerns, questions, suggestions, compliments or complaints please feel free to bring them to me. I welcome the feedback and try to take a pragmatic approach; wherever there is a deficiency we seek to improve and wherever we are succeeding we also seek to improve! Until next year friends.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'JOHN STORKAMP'. The signature is stylized with a large, looped 'J' and 'S'.

John Storkamp | Race Director