

Pikes Peak Marathon Will Take Place with Coronavirus Alterations

Pikes Peak Marathon + Ascent Press Release

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For Immediate Release

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The Pikes Peak Marathon will take place on Aug. 23 as originally scheduled. The Pikes Peak Ascent, scheduled for Aug. 22, was canceled in late May.

In partnership with El Paso County Public Health, race organizers have developed a plan that will ensure the safety of runners and community members in accordance with Gov. Jared Polis' COVID-19 guidance.

"We are pleased to be able to continue this 66-year Pikes Peak region tradition in 2020 and feel confident the event will be safe and enjoyable for all participants and volunteers," said Ron Ilgen, president of Pikes Peak Marathon, Inc.

The usual fanfare that surrounds the race will be muted this year, and many of the leadup and post-race events will be canceled or reduced due to limitations on gathering. Social distancing requirements will be enforced at the start and finish, and some aid stations may be eliminated. Runners will start in small waves, down from the usual 100-person waves. Masks or cloth face coverings will be required before and after the race and at packet pickup. Registered runners will receive an email with full details about the specifics.

Marathon runners were given notice on May 28 that the race was in jeopardy, and all received the option to defer their entry to 2021, receive a full refund, stay in the event pending approval, or receive a partial refund and donate the rest to nonprofit partners. The vast majority of runners have taken no action to date, implying they intend to stay in the event.

Interested runners who are not already signed up can still put themselves on the waitlist in case entries become available, though that is not guaranteed.

"Even with the required limitations and changes this year, I am confident the runners will still have the memorable running experience that the Pikes Peak Marathon is famous for," Ilgen said.

The race is seeking volunteers for packet pickup, race operations, aid stations, and other tasks; please visit pikespeakmarathon.org for more information. Safety precautions, including wearing masks, will also be required for volunteers.

Background Information

The Pikes Peak Marathon, founded in 1956, is the second-oldest continually held marathon in the United States, taking runners from Manitou Springs, Colorado, to the summit of Pikes Peak at 14,115 feet, and back down for a total of 26.2 grueling mountain miles. It and its sister race, the Pikes Peak Ascent, each climb about 7,800 vertical feet up the historic Barr Trail on the east face of the mountain. The Ascent, which climbs 13.3 miles to finish at the summit, used to be held on the same day as the Marathon but became its own event in the 1980s due to its popularity. The Marathon was home to the first official women's marathon finish in the U.S. as Arlene Pieper crossed the finish line in 1959.

Manitou Springs resident Matt Carpenter holds the men's speed records for both the Ascent (2:01) and the Marathon (3:16), both set during the Marathon in 1993. Colorado runner Kim Dobson holds the women's Ascent record (2:24), and Maude Mathys of Switzerland set a new women's Marathon record of 4:02 in 2019.

The races, some of the most well-known and competitive trail races in the world, draw more than 2,000 mountain runners and their families to the local area each August. Pikes Peak Marathon staff estimates the local economic impact of the weekend at about \$3.5 million between lodging, dining, and shopping. The Pikes Peak Ascent has its field capped at 1,800 runners, who are divided into waves by qualifying time. The Pikes Peak Marathon has fewer runners at 800 and also starts in waves.

The Pikes Peak Ascent and Marathon are the pinnacle events of the local Garden to Peak Series (formerly Triple Crown of Running), which also includes the Garden of the Gods 10-mile Run and the Barr Trail Mountain Race, both of which have been canceled for 2020. The Pikes Peak Marathon has also been part of the international Salomon Golden Trail World Series since 2018, bringing many of the world's top mountain runners to Pikes Peak. That series has been scaled down this year due to travel restrictions and health concerns.