

## [TRAIL FACTOR](#) Run Report #7 12/07/2008

### Angels Rest Palmer Mill Road 13.8 mile loop

I'm always excited on Sunday morning. It stems from my love for running and especially running trail. Many of our most recent trail factor runs have given me even more reason to be excited. This is due to the new trail that some of us are exploring for the first time and also the increase in attendance, which means more awesome people to run with.

[TRAIL FACTOR](#) had a record turnout this Sunday. We had a total of 11 people at the run and 1 cool canine, Pablo. Those attending the run included Mallory, Rick, Ruben, Shawn, Jessi, Chris, Reed, Michael, Brian, Mike and Joe. Those who were first timers to a TRAIL FACTOR run included Michael, Brian, Mike and Joe.

I've said this before, but it really is great having new folks attending the runs. I love getting to know new people and it also gives us a chance to learn from each other. Joe is a very experienced trail runner who has completed many challenging races such as [Plain 100](#) and brings a wealth of experience to the group. Brian and Mike both have completed several ultras. Brian most recently finished the [Mt. Hood PCT 50](#) and Mike the [White River 50](#). Michael was joining us from Colorado and looks like he will soon be moving out to Portland to experience the NW and join us on some additional trail runs.

The trail that we enjoyed this weekend started at one of our favorite locations located only 28 miles from Portland at the Bridal Veil exit. This is a great starting location because it gives you access to so much trail. We would be running a modified Angels Rest lollipop loop, which is our typical 15 mile run starting from this location. This weekend we would be running a true loop rather than a lollipop and it would be about 13.8 miles and include 3,400ft of climbing. Here is a map plotting out the run we completed this past Sunday.

### [Angels Rest Palmer Mill 13.8](#)

We've had such amazing weather this past week. Several clear days in a row, but this past Sunday would give us some true Portland style weather. It was cloudy, really foggy and a bit rainy. It's actually much more normal for this time of year and is needed. Without the rain, the lush green forest that we have become so accustomed to seeing, would no longer exist. I say bring on the rain and keep it coming for a few months.

Once we had all arrived, we talked a bit about the trail and explained the modification to our typical loop. We would be adding a great section on jeep road that would allow us to practice some long downhill hill running. Many of the races around the NW have long non-technical jeep road sections that can really beat you up if you are not used to running uninterrupted.

This run started with a long 1,500 ft climb up Angels rest. It climbs very steadily for about 2.5 miles before leveling out. There is an option to climb even more up to Devils Rest, but most of us were content to finish the first climb and enjoy some flat.

We had all started at different times, so we were all spread out across the trail. Ruben and Michael were jamming and slamming the course together, with Rick, Chris and Mallory not far behind. Joe, Brian, Mike and Reed were bouncing back and forth around each other and Jessi and I were sweeping the route to make sure everyone knew exactly where they were going.

After you finish the Angels Rest climb you run on some flat trail for a couple miles. It was extremely muddy, which is uncommon for this route. They no doubt had been performing some trail work in some sections. Also, it had recently rained which added a nice slippery component to the mud.

We carried on through the mud and finally reached one of the medium-length downhill sections. This section is fun. It's very gradual and is a super soft trail. It allows you to run quickly, but is interrupted by a few switchbacks to keep it interesting. It carries on that way for a bit before hitting Whakeena Springs.

Once you hit Whakeena Springs, you climb a bit more before descending once again. This is one of my favorite sections of trail. Reed and I were chatting about the trails amazing contrast. The trail looks manicured, with brown pine needles lining the trail, lush green moss and ferns growing on the edges, and then punctuated by the occasional dark grey rock. You are also surrounded by huge pine trees that on this day were covered by a natural foggy blanket. It was so cool. It makes you feel like you are running through a mystical and magical land.

The trail finally dumps into Larch Mountain trail. We climbed up Larch Mountain trail for a bit but soon turned off the single track trail. This would be the start of the second half of the run, which would be run entirely on Jeep Road.

The addition of the jeep road is the major variation in our typical 15 mile loop. The jeep road is very well maintained and offers up a very nice and gradual climb. It climbs about 500-800 ft in about 2 miles but then quickly levels out. I think that most of us would agree that this section definitely woke the legs up. Everyone seemed to be in very good spirits, especially Pablo the canine. Pablo was destroying the run. He is so little and runs up the hills with ease. If only I could harness his energy and strength to weight ratio.

After finishing the final climb up the jeep road, all we had left to complete was our four mile descent. This is a non-technical jeep road, which as I said before allows you to practice some uninterrupted downhill running.

Everyone seemed to be cruising really well down the hill. The first section of road offers a gradual descent, but the last 1.5 miles turns into a controlled fall. It gets very steep and in some sections must have over 20% in descending grade.

I had warned everyone about this section before the run, but I think most of them forgot somewhere in the middle of the run. However, I think they quickly remembered once they got there. I definitely heard many comments regarding the descent after we were done, but I think most of us agreed that running it in the direction we ran it, was preferred.

We all finished the run very strong and no one got TRAIL FACTORED. Ruben and Michael finished just under 2hrs. Rick, Chris, and Mallory finished in the 2:10 range. The rest of us finished over 2:30. It was a great run and we all agreed that it was a new favorite as compared to our original 15 mile loop. The original 15 mile loop incorporates some asphalt downhill and uphill sections that aren't preferred. I think we'll probably continue to make this loop one of our regulars.

Thanks for showing up everyone. Special thanks to Joe for tracking the run with his GPS unit. Without it, we would not have known how much we climbed. Technology is so cool.

If you are interested in joining us on one of our many TRAIL FACTOR runs, please visit our website for more info.

[www.trailfactor.com](http://www.trailfactor.com)

Shawn Bostad