

Trail Factor Run #2 Angels Rest/Wahkeena/Multnomah Falls Lollipop Loop

Trail factor had its second run since its inception. It was no less than spectacular. We headed out to one of our regular trails, which is only about 28 miles away from Portland. It starts at the Angels Rest Trail Head, out in the Columbia River Gorge. Getting there by car is simple. Just take I-84 east from Portland and take exit #28. That's the Bridal Veil Exit. The trail is just off to your right.

We've picked this as one of our regular runs because of its close proximity to Portland and it's amazing views of the Gorge and challenging topography.

As we left Portland, the temps were in the mid 40's and the sky clear. The weather was basically the same, with the exception that the wind was blowing and gusting to over 20 mph once we hit the trail head. It makes for some really windy summits.

This Trail Factor Lollipop loop is a challenging 15 mile loop with 4000+ ft. of climbing. There were seven trail factor runners willing to take the challenge. Participants included Jessi, Shawn, Ruben, Jeff, Rob, Mallory, and Rick. Jeff was the only Trail Factor new comer, but it was new dirt for a couple of the other runners.

This trail starts off with a 2.5 mile 1700ft climb. It climbs just above Angels Rest before eventually splitting off toward Wahkeena Springs, heading down Angels Rest Trail #415. One of the more challenging components of starting off with this trail lies within your inability to warm-up before heading up some really steep terrain. For some it's no problem, but for others, it's an anaerobic nightmare. The guys today hit it pretty swiftly climbing this section of trail in under 27 minutes and the ladies in just over 30 minutes and continued on to eventually re-group after a long downhill(Story Time Hill) at Wahkeena Trail #420. At this point we were all feeling pretty good. We covered 4.8 miles and were getting ready to head down Wahkeena Trail which is 1.8 miles to the Wahkeena Falls-Multnomah Falls connector trail .

On the way down this 1.8 mile steep heavily switch backed hill, Jeff showed me that he had some really amazing downhill moves. One move in particular was called the "JD Spin". It involves a quick Michael Jackson like spin in and out of a switchback. He claims that it can shave as much as 20 minutes off a 15 mile run. I tried it, but didn't perform it nearly as smoothly as he did. I may have to practice a bit more or wait for the "JD Spin" instructional video to come out.

Once you descend Wahkeena Trail #420, you are granted an amazing view of Wahkeena Falls. It's a great place to cool off after some hard running. This is also the point when you pick up the Wahkeena Falls-Multnomah Falls connector Trail. It's a quick transition to some flat terrain and really wakes up the senses after all that down-hill running.

We sped through that section and took a pit stop at the Multnomah Falls Lodge. This is another reason we run this trail frequently. You get a luxurious bathroom halfway through your run and optional food stop from one of the food stands feeding all of the Multnomah Falls Visitors. At this point we had been

on our feet for about 1:06 and the girls were only 18 minutes back reaching the lodge in 1:24. At this point it was time to tackle a bit more hill.

Once past the lodge we jammed up the Multnomah Falls hill, which rises 800ft in 1 mile. This really shakes up the legs after a pit-stop. Ruben and Jeff really hauled booty up this hill and beyond, but we eventually grouped together just before turning back onto Wahkeena Trail #420. The guys were back together and ladies were not far behind heading towards the last big climb of the day.

“Story Time Hill” named by Emily and Jessi because you can tell stories on the way down, but rarely on the way up, is that last climb before descending back down from the Angels Rest Summit. For some reason, this trail always feels tough. It’s a combination of being over 10 miles into the run, heavily depleted and a continued grade which tortures tired legs. We all labored on together toward the last summit of the day. We took a pit -stop to sample the view just above Angels Rest and prepared for our last 2.5 mile descent. It’s a steep one and descends the original 1700ft that we climbed at the start of the run.

This is a zippy descent and we completed it in about 20 minutes. This is the type of descent that makes you hate down-hill running. With tired quads we all jogged our way back to the car and stopped the watch in 2:28. That’s about a 9:52 pace for the whole run. Not bad considering all the climbing that we tackled.

The girls had a similar experience today. Mallory and Jessi were not far behind. Mallory stopping her watch in about 2:50 and Jessi in about 2:58. That’s a 15 plus minute PR for Jessi on this particular loop. Nice job Jessi. Everyone else enjoyed themselves. Jeff took a little spill on the way back down Angels Rest. He was not hurt and he scored a moderate 6.5 out of 10 for his fall. After the run we all drove over to McMenemy’s Edgefield for beer and burgers. A great caper to a hard days run.

If interested, here is a link that will take you directly to our trail map. Also, if you are interested in joining Trail Factor, e-mail Shawn at sbostad@gmail.com

[Angels Rest 15 Mile Lollipop Loop](#)