

September 26

Head Banger Trail Race

Radium Hot Springs, British Columbia

www.friendsofkootenay.ca

Race Director: Ron Verboom

Registration deadline: This event has a Parks Canada-imposed limit of one hundred participants. Early registration is recommended.

What's better than running a beautiful 10.8-kilometre run in one of Canada's most scenic mountain parks?

Being able to soak in hot springs mineral pools afterward.

A pass to the Radium Springs mineral pools is not the only perk. Throw in a post-race meal, a long-sleeve technical running shirt, and, more importantly, an absolutely stunning course with a cumulative elevation gain of 2,464 feet, and you've got yourself one heck of a deal. "The course is completely brutal; that is to say, awesome," says runner Roger Smith.

Race Director Ron Verboom decided to organize this event when he read a small advertisement in the local newspaper asking for fundraising ideas for the Friends of Kootenay. "I had run the trail for years and always knew how great it would be as a race," Verboom says. And, after miles of red tape (who knew that the area was a nesting place for rubber boas?), Verboom was finally granted access by Parks Canada to hold the event.

The course doesn't disappoint. Starting at the town's golf course, the diverse trail leads runners to the bottom of a canyon replete with lush cedars and waterfalls, up switchbacks, through Juniper trees, dry firs, grasslands, and through the Radium Hot Springs themselves. "This was a class event, friendly, small-town atmosphere, and for a great cause. I forecast a ninety-five per cent return runner rate," says one impressed runner.

Capped at one hundred participants, the Head Banger Trail Race is named for the numerous bighorn sheep that populate the area. In fact, in its inaugural race last year, spectators included a couple of very large rams. "Very well organized, great shirts, great food, great prizes, great course, great day, and the two bighorn sheep at the start of the race were a nice touch," says runner Rhonda Clark.
