

La Luz Trail Run

By Rodger Sack

Another beautiful morning for the running of the 44th Annual La Luz Trail Run. This was my 11th year as Race Director and the process is getting smoother each year. As I did last year, I used a random number generator to select the envelopes that I received from potential participants – I received 563 self addressed stamped envelopes between January 1st & May 1st.

Per John & Roxie Carpenter's very detailed accounting of the race results, there were a total of 345 finishers. The Forest Service puts a 400 runner cap on the race, I have been very careful over the years to insure that we always stay under that 400 cap.

There were some doubts early on that the Forest Service would not issue a permit to hold the race – initially they had some concerns about dead or dying pine trees in the Sandias and secondarily, there were some concerns about the condition of the trail itself. A couple of weeks before the race, I hiked the entire trail portion of the race with a representative of the USFS and a determination was made that the course was indeed run-able and the race was on.

Simon Gutierrez decided to not run La Luz this year and that meant that there would be a new Champion this year. Simon decided to run Pike's Peak, which is a couple of weeks after La Luz and then run in Italy around the end of August. Rachel Cuellar was back to defend her title.

Paul Howarth was the open men's winner with a time of 1:28:32. The new women's open champion was Erica Baron with a time of 1:36:13.

I would like to offer a big thank you to all of the volunteers that helped to make this another great race. John Farrow and Jane Thompson and her friends handled the work at the finish line and made sure that the race started exactly at 7AM. Stephanie Eras again coordinated the volunteer effort and arranged for all of the food and drinks that were at the finish line. Special Thanks to the Hams who have been with the race since the club started to host the run. The Rio Rancho scout troop also did an admirable job at the two middle aid stations on the course.

John & Roxie did their usual excellent job with the results. John Bryl was back to handle the announcing duties and thanks to all of those that helped with the finish line, handing out of the finisher's shirts, and to my wife (Connie) for working the food table. Great Harvest Bread provided bread and Premier Distributing Company provided the regular bottled water and flavored water at the finish line.

Thanks also to Albuquerque Journal for their continued great support and publicity of the La Luz Trail Run. See you next year.