



TRAILS FOR
ILLINOIS

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Ultra Marathoners to run 100 miles for fast times and trail improvements on Hennepin Canal State Trail

Ultra marathoners—a growing, international community of runners and racers who consider a 26.2 miles a warmup—will race non-stop day and night along 100 miles of Northwest Illinois' Hennepin Canal State Trail this September 12-13.

The payoffs for running 16 to 30 hours straight? A commemorative belt buckle, possibly a world-record time on the table-flat course, and new attention and resources to help improve the worn-down, 104-mile trail.

Up to 350 racers, supported by more than 1000 crew members and volunteers, will line up for the Hennepin Hundred on Saturday morning, September 12 in Sterling, Illinois. There are two route options, a 50 mile route that finishes at the canal's Lock 17 near Wyanet, Illinois, and a 100 mile route that ends at Timbrook Field in Colona, Illinois, near the Quad Cities. The 100 mile route offers also offers a team relay event.

The 50 mile racers are expected to finish Saturday night, but 100 mile racers will run through the night, most of them finishing early on September 13. The fastest 100 mile racers will finish in less than 16 hours, averaging nine minutes per mile or less.

The point-to-point ultra-marathon race passes through Illinois' picturesque rural towns and countryside. It's these features of the Hennepin Canal State Trail that the Hennepin Hundred's organizers, MUDD Ultra-running Dudes & Dudettes and Trails for Illinois, hope to promote and enhance. Their goal is to use the attention and some of the proceeds from the race to improve all trail visitors' experience year-round.

"A contiguous 100 mile trail for hiking, biking, snowmobiling and horseback riding sounds like another great Wisconsin vacation to most Illinoisans—but this 100 mile

trail is in Illinois” says Trails for Illinois executive director Steve Buchtel. “Illinoisans don’t know about it because our state has a hard time promoting and maintaining the visitors experience on our amazing trails.

“The Hennepin Hundred is already bringing national attention to the trail, and the money we raise can help Illinois improve and promote trail-oriented tourism.”

Race director Michele Hartwig of MUDD Ultra-running Dudes & Dudettes says more than 70 runners have already registered for the Hennepin Hundred from 10 states including Texas, California and Hawaii. Registration is limited to 350 racers.

Hartwig thinks trail running races could benefit trails all around the state. “We’ve already used the Hennepin Hundred to launch an ultra marathon series called Illinois Ultra Slam!” says Hartwig, partnering with three other existing ultra marathons in Illinois to grow ultra running and the appreciation of the trails we’re all using.”

Hartwig says a long list of partnering towns and agencies are excited about the attention an international-caliber event can bring to the area. “They understand how unique of a course this is, and how fast it could be. We could have a world record set that weekend.”

Partnering agencies and communities include the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the communities of Sterling, Rock Falls, and Colona; the Friends of Hennepin Canal; Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau; Blackhawk Waterways Convention & Visitors Bureau; Henry County Tourism Bureau; and Rock Falls Convention & Visitors Bureau.

There are hundreds of volunteer opportunities available over the race’s 36 hours for local groups, clubs and individuals, from manning aid stations to food runs to helping out on the course. Interested groups and individuals should contact her at dirrunner100@yahoo.com.

Find more information on the Hennepin Hundred at muddrunner.com, or on Facebook [@hennepin100](https://www.facebook.com/hennepin100). dirrunner100@yahoo.com.

The mission of MUDD Ultra-running Dudes & Dudettes is to bring trail runners together for training, events, education and community service. More information is available at muddrunner.com.

Trails for Illinois is a statewide non-profit organization whose mission is to connect Illinois and its communities to a network of non-motorized trails. “We want your home to be your trailhead,” says Buchtel. More information is available at trailsforillinois.org and on Facebook [@trailsforillinois](https://www.facebook.com/trailsforillinois), or e-mail Steve Buchtel at steve@trailsforillinois.org.