

GOING FOR THE RECORD RUN
Northville-Placid Trail
BY: SHERYL WHEELER
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Today was the day. I was going to try to break Tim Seaver's supported record run of 37 hours 31 minutes for the 122-mile part of the Northville-Placid Trail, a record he set in 2005. I would be the only woman to record a record and the oldest to hold the record if I broke it (I'm 48 years old). Also I would cover the whole trail – 133 miles – to set that record also.



I started out at 5:03 am on June 15th, 2011, at the official Northern Terminus of the Northville Placid Trail at the DEC sign at the corner of Old Military Rd. and Averyville Rd. in Lake Placid, running the 1.2 miles on Averyville Rd. to the Averyville Rd. trailhead. When I got to the trailhead (the start of the 122-mile part of the trail) I knew I would have no aid for 35+ miles, so I put on a big fanny pack stuffed with food and set off on my adventure.

I figured I'd try to maintain 4 miles an hour. There would be lots of mud, beaver dam crossings, many, many blow-downs (did I say lots of mud?) so my pace would be adjusted accordingly. In this first stretch I felt good for 15-16 miles. Then I hit a mental low spot (this happens in most of my long races). This lasted from Duck Hole to Cold River. Finally I met Dan and Dave (my crew) at the Tarbell Rd. trailhead parking area at 2:49 pm, 9+ hours into the run. I had some milk, deviled eggs, and put some more food into my pack. My water was in two bottles, one with a filter on it so I could get water along the trail.

The next section had a 1200-foot elevation gain over the shoulder of Blue Mt. Some of the climb was difficult to follow with a small tiny path. I've been on this before but from the other direction. The way I was going was steep going up but

down the other side was better and I started to feel like I got my second wind. I saw several bear tracks on the trail and also some moose tracks but no bears or moose.

I got to the Route 28 trailhead near Lake Durant and met up with my crew. It was still light but I knew it would be dark by the time I got to the next meeting with the crew so I got my headlamp and fueled up and headed out. There is a new section of trail in the next section that replaces about a 6-mile road walk on Cedar River Rd. I liked the trail part instead of dirt road so this was nice. At about 10pm I met up with Dan and Dave again near Wakely Dam. I put on another fanny pack to add to what I already had on and was off again.

The next 32 miles was the wildest part with many side trails to get lost on and I did. At about 2 am I went on a wrong trail but was lucky. It looped around back to the trail but I went the wrong way. After a few hours and found the trail again and finally made it to Piseco about 9 am. Boy was I glad to see the boys. Dan was worried about me and had come out on the trail to see where I was. After eating and drinking I was off on a three-mile paved road part of the trail in Piseco. A short time later I was back

in the woods headed for the suspension bridge over the West Branch of the Sacandaga River at Whitehouse, with only 16 miles left. Then I hit another low point. The trail seemed to go on forever.



Sheryl runs past the gate just north of the Upper Benson trailhead. Photo by David Boles

Then I saw Dan on the trail and he said I had ½ mile to go. I ran past the gate and made it to the trail register at Upper Benson. My time was 35:13 – 2 hours and 18 minutes better than Tim Seaver's record. I had done it!

Boy I was wiped out but still had 10.5 miles of road walk left in order to complete the 133 miles. Dan and Dave told me that the Northville Mayor and some people in Northville were waiting for me. So after I washed my feet in a stream, changed my socks and shoes I went on with my journey, walking all the way to town. It took me 4 hours and 3 minutes to do this part. I ran the last 100 yards to the clapping of about 15 people and touched the sign where the official Southern terminus of the trail begins at the west side of the bridge over the Sacandaga River. Total time was 39 hours 16 minutes from Northern terminus to Southern terminus – another new record.

Sheryl is greeted by the Northville, NY Mayor - James Groff and Northampton Historian Gail Cramer along with other well-wishers where she is presented with a framed certificate to commemorate her accomplishment.



Photo by Carla Kolbe