

My Running “Firsts”



My greatest running love is doing long solo adventure runs. To make them even more interesting, I enjoy doing “firsts.” These are tough runs that as far as I know, no one has ever attempted or accomplished before. By publishing these “firsts” I hope that others attempt these and even run them faster, establishing fastest known times.

My “firsts” described below were all solo and either unsupported or self-supported. If anyone knows of someone who has accomplished these runs before or after me, I welcome the information. When I do these runs, I don’t try for “fastest known times” because I enjoy sight-seeing and taking pictures. My aim is to just finish. My motivation for documenting these are not to boast of “records” but to inspire others to do the same and find creative “firsts” to push the limits of what is possible.

Adventure runs can be supported, self-supported, and unsupported.

- **Supported** means you have a dedicated support team that meets you along the way to supply whatever you need.
- **Self-supported** means that you don’t carry everything you need from the start, but you don’t have dedicated, pre-arranged people helping you. This is commonly done a couple different ways: You might put out stashes of supplies for yourself prior to the trip, or you might just use what’s out there, such as stores, begging from other trail users, etc.
- **Unsupported** means you have no external support of any kind. Typically, this means that you must carry all your supplies right from the start, except any water that can be obtained along the way from natural sources.

Spanish Fork Canyon to Provo Canyon – July 2, 2004, 55 miles, unsupported, about 26:00 – [details](#)

I ran from Spanish Fork Canyon, starting below Soldier’s Summit, most of the way on the Great Western Trail to the South Fork of Provo Canyon. I was such a rookie, had never been on the route before, hauled a pretty heavy pack, and greatly underestimated the difficulty. Perhaps someone had done this before.



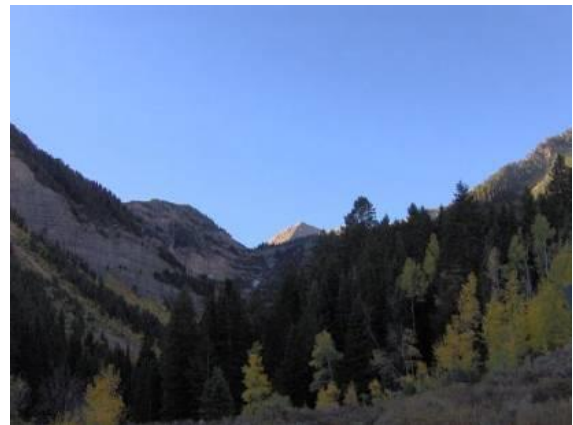
Loop around Lake Mountain – November 13, 2004, 32 miles, self-supported – [details](#)

I've accomplished this run all the way around Lake Mountain more than 15 times now. Several times I have run with friends. The route on the east side of the mountain is along a power line trail. I usually run that side before sunrise to avoid target shooters. (After the big 2012 fire, shooters are now banned, but some still appear.) I loop around the south side using Soldier Pass road. The east side is a straight dirt road in the valley to some dirt roads looping around the North end. Depending on the route, you can do an exact 50K. This is a great long training run. As of 2015, about a dozen other runners have made this run.



Quad Mount Timpanogos – June 30, 2006, 56 miles, self-supported, 20:51 (FKT) – [details](#)

Mount Timpanogos (11,749 feet) is the most popular hiking destination in Utah. I run the Timpooneke Trail because of its steady, runnable ascent and beautiful scenery through a series of four plateaus and meadows, collectively known as the Giant Staircase. The total elevation gain during this hike is 4,579 feet.

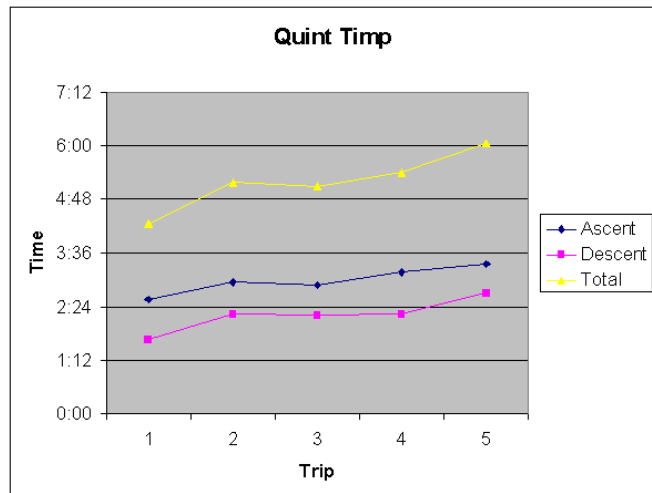


I had planned to run a triple Timpanogos, but on the way down from my third trip, I met fellow ultrarunner, Phil Lowry in the basin. He planned to match my triple accomplishment the following Monday. I said, "I should continue and do a quad today just to spite you!" He replied, "I bet you can't do it. You will get to the bottom with sore legs and call it quits. I dare you to try." I smiled, knowing that he threw down a challenge I couldn't resist. He had left a note on my car that said, "We are all freaks, and you are our KING! You are nuts, Phil." I headed back up. Despite my slow pace, I was still going faster than all the hikers. At the top, local ultrarunner pioneer, Grizz Randall congratulated me. I did it! I accomplished the first Quad Timpanogos. That Monday, Phil Lowry attempted to match my quad. He allocated 17 hours for the feat and was pretty much on schedule, but called it quits after triple. He was the second person to accomplish a triple.

A few weeks later, Dallon Manscill matched my quad, doing it as supported run. I accomplished a quad two more times, once during my quint, another times during my sextuple.

Quint Mount Timpanogos – August 18, 2006, 70 miles, self-supported, 27:24 – [details](#)

Since Dallin had matched my quad, I was asked many times if I was going to go for five. Yes, I was determined, but fully knew how difficult it would be with nearly 24,000 feet of climbing. It would be a busy time on the mountain and many friends would witness my nutty accomplishment. As I passed people, many asked me the usual questions. I tried to explain that I was trying to break my record of four summits and do five consecutive summits. One guy asked me, “What kind of record is that, a record for the criminally insane?” During my fifth trip, word traveled up and down among the hikers what I was doing. I stopped to talk to many groups who were very encouraging and cheered me on. I arrived to the top for the fifth time without fanfare, just quietly went into the hut and signed the register. When I returned to the trailhead, a forest service guy was there and said, “There he is, the 5-summit guy!” My total time ended up being 27:24:36.



Grand Canyon R2R2R via Hermit's Rest – November 24, 2006, 77 miles, self-supported, about 34:00 – [details](#)



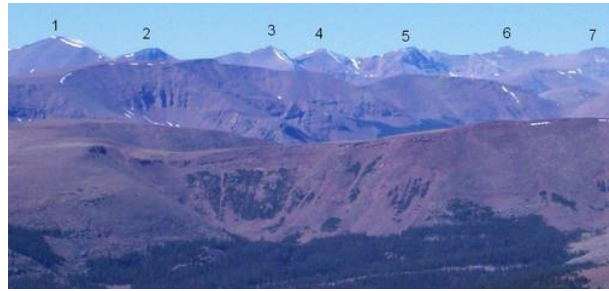
I had previously accomplished ten R2R2Rs (double crossings) and wanted to start exploring the more remote areas of the canyon, so I decided to do a very long, different R2R2R, using the Hermit trail on the South Rim. I started at the North Rim, went to Hermit's Rest on the South Rim and returned. The experience running on the remote Tonto Trail was amazing. It was difficult to run fast because it was faint and times and I kept losing it. The final climb up the North Rim was a painful, slow, death march, but I made it! I threw in an additional ten miles for fun to explore some additional sections of the Tonto Trail further down the river. In later years I would run that section.

While taking a picture of Granite Rapids on the Colorado River, a desert bighorn sheep came close to me and went right in my picture. As of 2016, I'm still the only person to have accomplished this R2R2R.



Seven Utah 13-ers – Kings-Emmons Ridge – July 7, 2007, 48 miles, unsupported, about 20:00 – [details](#)

The highest peak in Utah is Kings Peak, with an elevation of 13,528. In Utah there are 17 peaks that qualify as 13ers (over 13,000 feet). Utah has no peaks over 14,000 feet. All of these peaks are found in the Uinta Mountain range. One thing that makes summiting Utah's 13ers very difficult is the distances from the nearest roads to the peaks – 20-40 miles round trip.



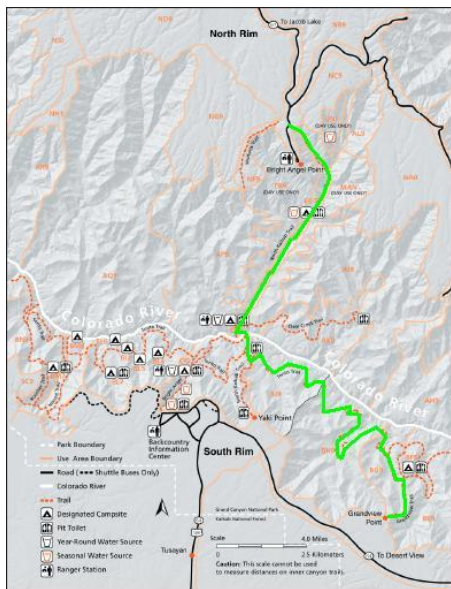
Kings-Emmons Ridge

The Kings-Emmons Ridge is the highest continuous ridge in Utah, one of the highest in the United States, and certainly the highest in the United States outside Colorado. Descriptions tell hikers that it will take them 4-6 days to do a round-trip of hiking the ridge. Four-to-six days? How about one day? I could do it.

This turned out to be the most dangerous solo adventure I ever ran. It is so remote with no one else up on that high ridge that involves boulder hopping for more than five miles. It required careful skill on moving boulders to avoid injury. I fell hard one time, hit my chin and nearly knocked myself out with no one around for miles. I'll never try this again solo, but I did it! I was the first person to travel the Kings-Emmons Ridge in one day from a trailhead, along the way summit 7 13-ers, and return to the trailhead. After finishing, that night, I had nightmares all night about boulder hopping. In 2015, two runners did Kings-Emmons Ridge as part of linking up all of the Utah 13-ers in 36:18.

Grand Canyon R2R2R via Grandview – October 12, 2007, 83 miles, unsupported, 34:07 – [details](#)

On this adventure, I accomplished a R2R2R (double crossing) from North Kaibab to Grandview Point and back, more than 83 miles. About forty of these miles were on the primitive East Tonto trail. In the hiking guides, ten days would be recommended for this adventure. I accomplished it in 34 hours. My climb up and down the South Rim was on the unmaintained Grandview Trail.



Route in Green



I had navigation problems at night but my GPS would eventually get me back on the serpentine Tonto Trail. The final climb up to the North Rim was slow. It seemed like hundreds of hikers were coming down the trail. Because I was such a mess, they could tell that I had come a very long way. I explained to a few that I had come over 80 miles. Finally the end came in sight. I had done it! I had accomplished the first known double crossing

from North Kaibab to Grandview Point

No one else has accomplished this feat. However, I repeated on November 26, 2009, 33:58 (FKT) – [details](#)

Utah Triple Crown – August 1, 2008, 37 miles, unsupported, 14:34 – [details](#)

For my 50th birthday, I figured since I was officially “over the hill,” why not go over some huge hills? I wanted to summit the three highest peaks in Utah and return to the trailhead, all in one day. This was inspired by Craig Lloyd, in 2003, who did it using a base camp, but so far no one had accomplished it from a trailhead. I wanted to be the first.

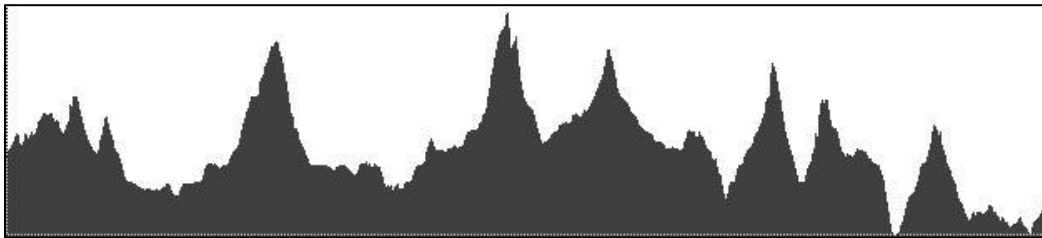


The three peaks, located in the Uinta Mountains are:

- 1- Kings Peak – 13,528
- 2- South Kings Peak – 13,512
- 3- Gilbert Peak – 13,442

I did it! The Utah Triple Crown. I returned home that evening in time for birthday cake. My final time was 14:34:59. But that time was very soft and was easily broken in the years to come by several others.

Solo Uinta Highline Trail, Leidy to Hayden, July 30, 2010, 78 miles, unsupported, 33:19 – [details](#)



Elevation profile of the Highline Trail

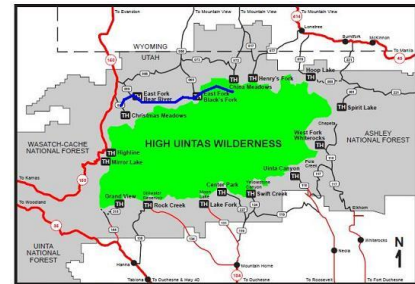
The highest continuous established trail in the Uintas is the Highline Trail (#025) that runs the length of the mountain range. In its entirety, the trail is more than 100 miles long. A 78-mile stretch from Leidy Peak on the east to Hayden Pass on the west is generally recognized as the end-to-end expanse of the trail. I had run much of this trail, but as of yet, no one had run/hiked it solo in less than three days. Others have fast packed the trail before, but no one solo in less than two days.

The hardest challenge about this adventure is getting off trail, even with a GPS. Some people who have never run it think it can be run solo in less than 24 hours. All I can say is prove it. Go try it. To do it fast solo, requires much familiarity of the trail and good experience in the Uintas.

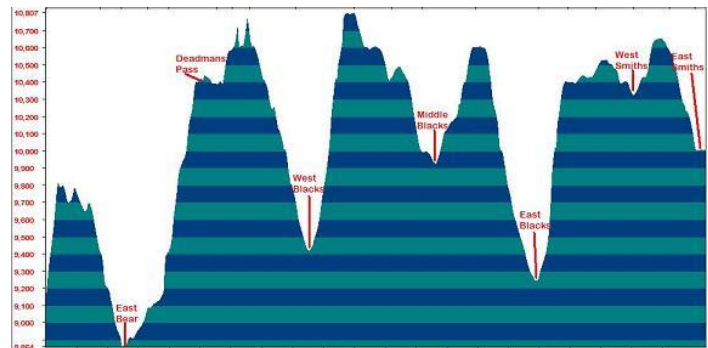
So I did it. I set a speed record on the Uinta Highline Trail for Leidy Peak to Hayden Pass in 33:19:12. The time was soon broken but the solo time stood until the impressive run by the late Stephen Jones in 2013 who set the fastest known time of 27:41:49 and did it solo.

Bear River Smiths Fork Trail double, September 3, 2010, 59 miles, unsupported, 18:08 (FKT) – [details](#)

The Bear River – Smiths Fork Trail (#091) (Also sometimes referred to as the North Slope Trail) is a long-forgotten trail in the Uinta Mountains that crosses the North Slope from west to east. This mostly forest trail connects seven river forks, and climbs up and over six major ridges. It covers nearly 30 miles with climbs totaling more than 7,000 feet. The altitude for the route is between 8,800 feet and 10,800 feet.



High Uintas Wilderness Access Map
My Route



Profile of trail

Because the trail is old and forgotten, there are few signs to identify it. Portions of the trail have been taken over by ATV routes, cross-country ski courses, and in a few short sections, newer dirt roads. Portions are faint and are a challenge to navigate. Because of infrequent trail maintenance in this section, the trail has about 400 deadfall downed trees to hop over. After scouting sections of the trail, I was ready to run it end-to-end and back. I started at 1:00 a.m. and finished about 7 p.m. the next evening. It had been an amazing adventure. The weather had been perfect. As of 2016, I'm still the only person to accomplish this.

Double Kings Peak, August 12, 2011, 52 miles, self-supported, 18:05 (FKT) – [details](#)

Kings Peak is the highest peak in Utah at 13,528 feet. All of Utah's peaks over 13,000 feet are located in the Uinta Mountains. I've summited ten of them. Kings Peak gets the most attention and each weekend in the summer dozens of hikers make the trek to the top.

Would it be possible to summit Kings Peak twice in one day, a double? This would involve running from the trailhead to the summit and back twice, a run of about 52 miles and about 10,000 feet of climbing with almost all of it above 10,000 feet. I heard that several people were going to attempt it this weekend, so I decided to join in. With all my experience doing multiple Timpanogos summits, I knew it would be tough, but very possible.



It was a long and tough adventure. I finally finished the first known Double Kings Peak in 19:44:10. I knew that was a terribly slow time, but still, I was the first person to do it. I think a good time would be around 15 hours. The four others who attempted a double this weekend all quit after one trip. I knew how

mentally tough it is to go back out after one trip, so it wasn't surprising. So, I was the last one standing (or stumbling).

In 2013, twice I attempted to do a Triple Kings Peak. Both times, I just could not pull myself out of my car for a third trip. It is so mentally tough to do. But, I did do two more doubles.

Repeated on August 3, 2013 – [details](#)

Repeated on August 9, 2013, 18:05 (FKT) – [details](#)

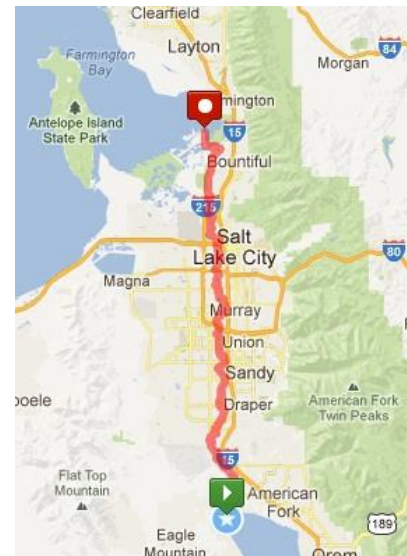
As of 2016, I am still the only person who has accomplished a double Kings Peak.

Loop around Utah lake – October 15, 2012, 82-84 miles, self-supported, 19:28 (FKT) – [details](#)

Every year, hundreds of bikers, bike around Utah Lake, a distance of about 100 miles. They go right by my house and it is fun to watch them. I got the crazy idea to try running around it. I knew I could cut the distance some, but using some old railroad tracks and some trail short cuts. I used convenient stores along the way as my aid stations. It was a long day but I did it. This [video](#) tells the story. In 2015, I [repeated this run](#) with an 84-mile course that avoided railroads. I finished in 19:28.

Utah Lake to Great Salt Lake – November 8, 2012, 58 miles, self-supported, about 14:00 – [details](#)

The Jordan River in Utah meanders for more than 50 miles between Utah's largest natural fresh-water lake (Utah Lake) and the famed Great Salt Lake. For many years a paved recreational trail has been constructed along the river. It is named: Jordan River Parkway Trail. As far as I can tell, no one has before attempted to run the trail end-to-end in one day. That was my quest for this urban adventure run. I decided to go further than that and link up with the Legacy Parkway Trail and the go out to the Great Salt Lake. This adventure wasn't difficult, it was mostly an urban run. I don't know anyone else who has accomplished this.



Run around the south Oquirrh Mountains – November 30, 2013 62 miles, self-supported, about 17:00 – [details](#)

I accomplished my 4th 100K+ training run in the past 22 days, for a big mileage month of 441 miles. I started at 2:00 a.m. in the little town of Cedar Fort, ran clockwise around the southern portion of the Oquirrh. Dawn came around mile 23 on the west side of the mountains. This [video](#) tells the whole story. No one else has been crazy enough to try this.

Solo unsupported Kat’cina Mosa 100K – June 21, 2013, 64 miles, unsupported, about 18:00 – [details](#)

One of toughest 100K races in the country is held in Utah, in August each year. It is called Kat’cina Mosa 100K. The course runs a huge loop behind the Wasatch Mountains that rise above Provo and Springville. Nearly half of the course shares the same course as Squaw Peak 50, but in the opposite direction. Kat’cina Mosa runs clockwise and includes about 17,000 feet of climbing along the way over its 62 miles. When I went to the store to buy my food for the run, I ran into a friend who was stocking his van for this weekend’s Wasatch Back Ragnar Relay. I chuckled as I observed the huge amount of food and drink stocked in the van for their series of 10K runs, and then looked down at the little bag of food that I would stuff into my small camelback, for my entire 62 miles.



I started in the afternoon and around dusk came close to a bear running across my route and during the night I was “herded” by a couple sheep dogs who wanted the bacon in my pocket. Later, I chased a cow and a calf for about three miles down a narrow canyon. I finally made it back to my car, accomplishing the 100K run. It had been a great adventure. I sure love running at night but can do without the wildlife and farm stock. No one else has been crazy enough to attempt this. I repeated this run in 2014.

Loop around Brown Duck Mountain – July 3, 2013, 33 miles, unsupported – [details](#)

This run is in the Uinta Mountains accessible from the South side. I ran around a large mountain, Brown Duck Mountain and reaches Cleveland Pass. The trailhead is north of Duchesne and Mountain Home, at Moon Lake. It was an easy drive, 2:45 from my home, all on pavement. The trail is very rugged at times, as most trails in the Uintas are. This [video](#) tells the story.

Five highest Wasatch Peaks – September 19, 2013, 40 miles, self-supported, 21:33 (FKT) – [details](#)

Could it be done? The highest peaks in Utah are found in the Uinta mountain range, but the most impressive peaks that rise from the valley floor to the sky are found in the Wasatch Front. Could the top five be summited in one day? This was one of my toughest “firsts.” It took me two separate attempts to do it. I thought I had climbed the six highest peaks, but later I learned that Bomber Peak doesn’t qualify, not having 300-feet of prominence. These mountains are in three different locations, requiring a 1.5-2 hour drive between them. When I finally finished, I felt pretty thrashed, especially from all the falls going up and down the last tough peak above Snowbird Ski resort. My Garmin indicated that I had climbed about 18,000 feet during my crazy run. While it wasn’t very far, it was very rugged. It felt like I had just finished a 100-mile race. No one else has ever attempted this in a day.



Loop around Mount Nebo – October 13, 2013, 47 miles, unsupported, about 15:00

I have a funny fascination with running completely around mountains. For this adventure I ran around Mount Nebo, the highest mountain in the Wasatch Front. I ran through pretty deep snow and on the south side just couldn't find the right route. I was stubborn and rather than just run the paved highway into Nephi, went back up a canyon to try to find the right way. I still missed it and eventually ran back to the highway into Nephi and then on roads back to my car on the northwest side of the mountain. The [video](#) tells the story. No one else has been crazy enough to attempt this.

Eight highest peaks in Utah County – July 3, 2015, 43 miles, supported, about 30:48 (FKT) - [details](#)

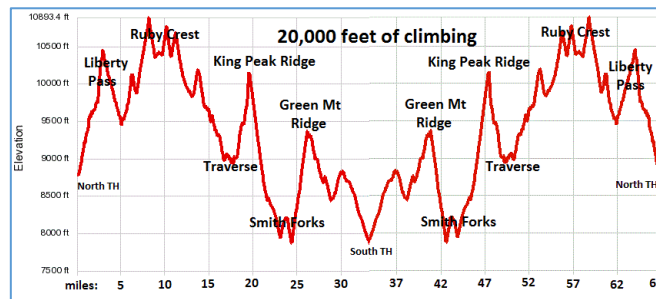
Would it be possible to bag the highest six peaks in Utah County in a day? As I looked closer, why not do all eight peaks in Utah County that are above 11,000 feet? The goal stuck in my mind. I knew it would be very tough, with about 20,000 feet of climbing, but I believed it could be done, and by me. On [July 4, 2014 I made my attempt](#). Fireworks were firing off all evening below me in the valleys inspiring me on. But I came up short and only bagged five peaks. I learned a ton and still believed that it could be done.



A year passed and I made my second attempt on July 3, 2015. Using all the experience from the past year, I made careful plans to compress the time it would take and to do the most difficult sections during daylight. My progress improved compared to the year before by hours, and with some help with friends, I was on the top of the 8th peak in 28 hours and back to my car in 30:48.

Double Ruby Crest – June 26, 2015, 66.6 miles, supported, about 25:38:07 (FKT) - [details](#)

The Ruby Mountains are a range 80 miles long in Nevada above the small cities of Wells and Elko. They can be seen prominently from I-80 and usually are snow-covered late into the summer. As I've driven by, I've wondered about this range rising above the desert floor and whether or not there were any good trails up there. With some checking, I discovered the existence of the Ruby Crest National Recreation Trail, most of which runs through the Ruby Mountains Wilderness area between 8,000 and 11,000 feet elevation. Trailhead to trailhead is about 33.7 miles. If you use the shorter pack trail alternative on the north end, the distance is about 33.3 miles.



I decided that I wanted to run the trail end-to-end and back. As far as I can tell, the fastest known time (FKT) for the trail in one direction is by Stephen Lindsay in 2013, starting from the Harrison pass in 10:23. It is unknown what his trailhead time was, probably around 9:45.

The adventure was incredible and the mountains beautiful. All the climbing totaled about 20,000 feet along the way. That turned out to be one of my finest solo adventure runs ever. The Ruby Mountains are an amazing place. I'm sure I will return and run the trail much faster.

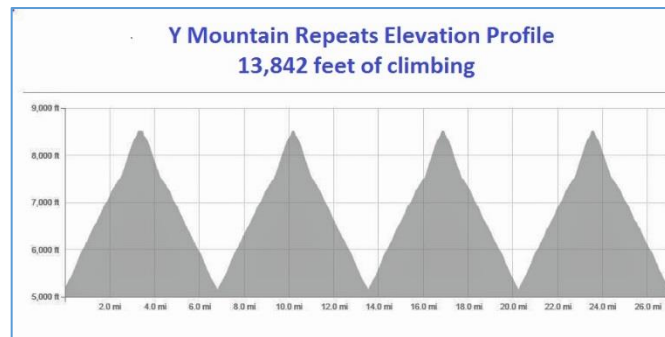
South Oquirrh Mountain Traverse – June 14, 2015, 20.1 miles, unsupported (FKT) 11:42 - [details](#)

The Oquirrh Mountains is a mountain range that runs north-south for 30 miles on the west side of Salt Lake Valley and Utah County. I had climbed up to the ridge top in three spots and have always wondered if it was possible to traverse the entire southern portion of the range along the ridge top, starting from the desert floor at Fairfield to Butterfield Canyon. This turned out to be a rugged difficult adventure but I utilized amazing deer trails that traverse near the tops of the ridges and bagged all the named peaks on the ridge, Lewiston, Flat Top, Lowe, Kelsey, and Butterfield Peaks. My time from the desert floor to the highest Butterfield Peaks was nearly exactly 12 hours. I then ran the canyons back to Cedar Pass and my car, for a total adventure run of 40 miles. In 2016 I [duplicated this run](#) and improved my ridge time to 11:42.



Quad Top of Y Mountain – May 30, 2015, 27 miles, self-supported, 11:20:52 (FKT) - [details](#)

Periodically I like to insert “repeats” into my training. I will select a difficult day hike and see how many times in a row I can do it in, at a much faster pace than hikers. On the day I chose to do repeats to the top of Y Mountain in Provo Utah from the trailhead to the top of the city overlook, four times. The trail first climbs to the top of the block Y on the mountain and then continues on up a couple of steep valleys to the top of the mountain. I successfully climbed it four times in a row, certainly a first because it is so crazy to do.



End to end Lake Mountain on spine – May 2, 2015, 16 miles, unsupported, 5:50 - [details](#)

Lake Mountain rises 3,200 feet behind my home. I’ve run around it many time, run up and down it many times, but felt it was time to run the entire spine of the mountain end to end. I’ve come close in the past but used a valley road to descend on the southern end. Instead, I wanted to stay up on the ridges to the far south end at Soldier’s Pass Road. I started at 2:45 a.m. and did the long northern ascent in the dark. Much of the ascent is bushwhacking on deer trails, but eventually you join with roads near the utility towers and there is a 4WD road all along the top. It eventually descends into a canyon, but I stayed up on the spine and bushwhacked from ridge to ridge descending to the south. Once accomplished, I ran back to my starting point using the foothills for a 34-mile adventure.



Run around the Onaqui Mountains – March 12, 2016, 48 miles, unsupported, 10:30 - [details](#)

These mountains lie south of the Stansbury Mountains (Deseret Peak) and north of the Pony Express Trail. The south end and west side involves fast dirt road running and I visited the small town of Terra. From there the route is paved up and over Johnson Pass to the little town of Clover. The run on the east side required some creativity and route finding. My chosen route could have been much tighter around the east side mountain range to reduce miles, but would have needed more bushwhacking, more ups and downs, and running on some private property. I was content to run a loop approaching 50 miles.



Cathedral Valley Loop – February 16, 2016, 47 miles, self-supported, 10:24 (FKT) - [details](#)

Cathedral Valley is one of the great remote areas of Utah, part of Capitol Reef National Park. It contains amazing sandstone monoliths. Not many people make this trip. It usually requires a high-clearance vehicle and at times a 4WD vehicle. I decided that I would try to run the entire Cathedral Valley loop. Instead of running the highway to connect the ends of the road, I used a remote 4WD road (0146) to complete the loop. Surely no one had ever attempted this before. With some sight-seeing detours along the way, my run was 47.2 miles.



Quad Squaw Peak – May 7, 2016, 30 miles, self-supported, 9:54 (FKT) - [details](#)

Squaw Peak is a prominent peak rising above the BYU campus at Provo Utah. To get in some good hill training, one morning I decided to do repeats. One round-trip involves 7.4 miles and 2,800 climbing. I started early, at 2:30 a.m. I had hoped to do five, but on my fourth trip a storm hit, turning the trail into a “slip-and-slide.” The trail does quickly dry and I should have continued, but mentally the storm had rattled me and I was ready to quit.



Sanpitch Mountains Traverse - May 14, 2016, 52 miles, unsupported, 16:30 - [details](#)

The Sanpitch Mountain Range is just south of the Wasatch Mountains. It is about 40 miles long and its highest point is Salt Creek Peak (9,997 feet). My adventure was hard and tough. It started off with some steep scrambling to get to the top of the range. The snow was still deep in parts but I made good progress and ran with amazing views all day. My exit from the range involved a remote canyon with rattlesnakes and a bobcat to keep me company.



Run around the Simpson Mountains - May 21, 2016 – 49 miles, unsupported, 11:56 (FKT) - [details](#)

The Simpson Mountains are a mountain range in the remote west desert of Utah that rise nearly 4,000 feet above the desert floor. They are about 13 miles long and ten miles across. They are named for explorer Captain James H. Simpson, a topographical engineer who explored the routes near this mountain range in 1858-59. I began my run at 2:42 a.m. from the site of Porter Rockwell's historic ranch from the 1850s, near Government Creek. My run all the way around took me just under 12 hours and I had to run against some brutal headwinds while going south.



Pahvant Mountains Traverse – June 10, 2016 – 58 miles, unsupported, 18:00 - [details](#)

The Pahvant Mountains are a range in Central Utah above Scipio, Richfield, and Fillmore. It is about 44 miles long and 10 miles across. There are a number of peaks above 10,000 feet. I ran starting at the valley floor in Scipio, at the north end of the range and ran up to the main ridge, all the way across using trails and dirt roads, and then descended back to the valley floor on the south end at Richfield. My run was spectacular with beautiful green slopes and an explosion of wildflowers. The next day I partially ran back to the start in the valley until pouring rain fell.



Sextuple Mount Timpanogos – July 5, 2016, 84 miles, self-supported, 35:55 (FKT) – [details](#)

Nearly ten years passed since I accomplished five consecutive summits of Mount Timpanogos. No one had matched or broken that record. I had attempted and failed three times to increase the record to six and each time vowed I wouldn't try again. But in July, 2016, I found the determination again, blocked off enough time to allow doing it, and finally succeeding in running up and down the mountain six times. Little did I know that two friends had been planning for several months to match or break my record of five and I shocked them that I upped the record just a few days before their attempt. Scott Wesemann became the next person to accomplish

