



Iron Furnace Trail Run Course Descriptions

***Note: In 2025 we were asked by Lake Hope State Park to change our Start/Finish Location, and move from the Lake Hope Lodge to the Lake Hope Beach Parking Lot. This change in the start/finish location will alter the original course which had remained the same from 2014-2024. While we were disheartened to make the first ever alteration to the IFTR course in race history, we're confident the new course will provide the same experience as you've come to expect at Iron Furnace! The 13.1 Mile course will still mostly be on the Zaleski Backpack Trail, with only the first and last 2 miles of the course being different. The 4.5 mile course will now be a 5 mile course and will be a completely new course. Below is a description of the two courses.**

[Link to the ODNR published Zaleski Backpack Trail Map](#)

13.1 Mile Course Description

The 13.1 mile course will be marked with **pink flagging** along with direction arrows at key turns and intersections. 13.1 mile and 5 mile runners start at separate times and go different directions from the very start. The 13.1 Mile race will be led out with a vehicle until it reaches the trail.

The 13.1 mile course is the more challenging of the two courses with frequent steep uphill and downhill sections. Most of the course is run on the rugged Backpack Trail of Zaleski State Forest. This course can be described as difficult and hilly but totally worth the challenge! Runners will be greeted with several spectacular vistas as well as one of the most gorgeous trail sections in SE Ohio featuring rock outcroppings and gorges that might just make you stop running to enjoy the sights. Runners will need to cross St. Rt. 278 within the first half-mile and with a half-mile to go. After crossing St. Rt. 278 runners will enter the Zaleski Backpack Trail and remain on the backpack trail until they return back, making a full lollipop shape.

Cut-off information: the course remains open for 4.5 hours (20:36 pace per mile)
There will be a cut-off at the mile 8.05 mile aid station of 3 hours (21:41 pace per mile)
Runners that do not reach the 8.05 mile aid station in 3 hours will be transported back to the finish line.

13.1 Mile Terrain and Course Overview:

- True distance is 13.49 Miles
- 2185 feet of elevation gain
- 12.49 miles of singeltrack trail
- 1 mile of pavement

- Aid Stations: miles 2.93 and 8.05
- Cutoff: 3 hours at the 8.05 mile aid station.

13.1 Mile Turn-by-Turn Directions

- The 13.1 mile course starts at the Lake Hope Beach Parking Lot.
- Runners will run out on Park Road 9, which is the road you entered while driving in.
- Near ½ Mile runners will turn left on St. Rt. 278 and then about 100 yards turn right onto Wheelabout Rd.
- At the 0.7 mile mark runners will enter the Zaleski Backpack Trail.
- The start of the Backpack Trail is the hardest hill on the course. From here go 1.5 miles until the trail intersects the main Backpack Trail Loop (Point B on the map), and turn right. Now you are on the loop portion of the course.
- From here you'll follow the course markings, but there will also be orange blazes on the trees, signifying the Backpack Trail. You'll pass by two of the backpack camps (water stop at mile 2.93). After 8.03 miles total until you reach the gravel King Hollow Rd (Point F on the map).
- At King Hollow Rd. you'll have the main aid station, with food and drink.
- Intersection King Hollow Road to continue on the Backpack Trail (****note that this is different from the former course, and runners won't be on the gravel road any***).
- Follow the Backpack Trail for another 2.1 miles until you reach a 3 way intersection (Point G on the map). At this intersection turn left, which is the "side trail" leading to Point O on the map.
- After 0.6 miles you'll insect King Hollow Rd. again - shortly after crossing the gravel road you'll turn left to stay on the Backpack Trai (Point O on the map).
- After this turn continue another 0.5 miles and you've completed the loop. Turn right at this intersection (Point B), which is the same section you start on but going the opposite way - this is 2.25 miles to go.
- After 1.5 miles you'll exit the Backpack Trail and return the same way you started, turning left on St. Rt. 278, then right onto Park Rd. 9 that leads to the Beach.
- After reaching a parking area you'll see course markings directing you right through a parking lot to a path along the lake. From here you have 0.3 miles to go, and course markings will direct you to the finish!

5 Mile Course Description

The 5 mile course will be marked with **pink flagging** along with direction arrows at key turns and intersections. 13.1 mile and 5 mile runners start at separate times and go different directions from the very start. The 5 Mile race will be led out with a vehicle until it reaches the trail, about 4/10 of a mile into the course.

Although easier than the 13.1 course, the 4.5 mile course still offers some great sights along the way with just over 100 feet per mile on nice singletrack trails

Cut-off information: the 5 mile course remains open for the duration of the event (4.5) hours, so it is perfect for walkers.

5 Mile Terrain Overview

- True distance is 5.11 miles
- 587 feet of elevation gain
- 4 miles of singeltrack trail
- 0.5 mile of pavement
- Aid Station: mile 3.1

5 Mile Turn-by-Turn Directions

- The 5 mile course starts in the Lake Hope State Park Beach Parking Lot.
- After starting, turn right onto Park Road #9 and follow for about 0.3 miles to a gravel road toward the shelter. This gravel road dead ends, and this is where the Furnace Trail Begins.
- Follow the Furnace Trail for about 1 mile before making a sharp left on a small connector trail that will be clearly marked on race day, but is otherwise easy to miss.
- The Connector Trail brings you up a steep hill and will intersect the Wildcat Trail, where the course turns left.
- Stay on Wildcat Trail for about 0.75 miles - you'll cross one gravel forest road, and then come to a second gravel road where the water stop for the 5 mile course will be.
- Cross the forest road where the water stop is and reenter the trail, and now you'll be on Sidewinder Trail.
- You'll stay on Sidewinder Trail for 2.75 miles, until you pop out at the bottom of a hill, near the finish, where there will be event parking.
- From here you will only have about 0.3 miles to go, and course markings will direct you through the parking lot to a path along the lake, which brings you back to the finish!