

12 Hours of Penitence - BLM Proposal
Race Director Sydney Schalit
2/3/2015

The endurance racers of the sport of mountain biking are a special group. They are conscientious, powerful, engaging and absolutely fun. I've been lucky enough to compete in a few races and after riding at Penitente Canyon with some fellow racers and riders, we realized what a great location Penitente would be for a 12-hour race.

The location is cool, off the beaten path, unusual, family-friendly, with great trails. The surrounding towns and natural wonders are equally unique. Penitente Canyon will make for an awesome race location and I am very excited to bring it to my racing family and to the people of the San Luis Valley.

Involved Parties (not including sponsors)

Sydney Schalit - Race Director
Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado
Bureau of Land Management Members
County Commissioners of Saguache and Rio Grande Counties
La Garita Trading Post

Economic Benefits for the San Luis Valley

The economic benefits of hosting this race at Penitente Canyon include increased business during a shoulder season for local hotels, campsites, restaurants, stores and area attractions. A 12-hour race typically sees 150+ racers, their "pit crew" - which often consists of 2 people and their families. The latter demographics make up for most of the spectators. Having around 500 people at Penitente Canyon mid October will boost local sales, lodging numbers and will give these cycling tourists a taste of what the San Luis Valley has to offer: unique places, wonderful people, epic riding, while being extremely family-friendly. Race reports will proliferate throughout the region via word of mouth, blogs, social media and cycling periodicals. This will, in turn, continue to benefit Penitente and the San Luis Valley long after the last competitor passes the finish line.

Potential Growth Plan

This race is intended to boost public knowledge of the great riding of Penitente and promote the beautiful San Luis Valley. The inaugural race, held October 18 2015, will pave the way for this to become an annual event, bringing hundreds of riding and outdoor-minded people to the valley each fall. As for growth, it seems best to wait to decide upon expanding the number of racers each year based on a post-race meeting that examines all issues related to the race. If we look at growth with more of a spectator and sponsorship perspective, the possibilities are limited only on what we can host on BLM

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managed lands.

Potential Impact Mitigation Techniques

We are currently, and plan to continue working closely with Brink Messick of VOC, and the BLM land managers assessing the conditions and sustainability of the race route. We will, as all races do, encourage racers to pass in designated passing zones and emphasize the fragility of the area and importance of the racers being environmentally conscientious while riding. Brink Messick will provide us with a pre-race trail assessment, giving us insight into particularly vulnerable scenarios and spaces so that we can designate them as such. Once the trails are assessed, we will work with the BLM and VOC to utilize local volunteer projects to prepare trails and increase the overall sustainability of the route.

Course Objective and Overview

The racecourse will provide each racer with a 12-15 mile (exact course TBD and may be modified if weather or environmental issues arise the day of) race lap. The racecourse will begin and end at the main Penitente Canyon trailhead area where there will be a designated area for spectators, a medic tent and also race volunteers to assist riders in case of an issue.

Day of Event

The racecourse will begin and end at the main Penitente Canyon trailhead area. The start line will face east and the racers will begin pedaling east then turn west on North Witches Canyon Road. This is a typical race start which allows the fastest riders to pass safely, with plenty of room, and allows slower paced riders the comfort of getting some space. The finish line will end on a south/eastbound new trail that the VOC is proposing, that, after descending Iglesia de San Juan will connect CR41G to the Penitente Canyon Road trailhead area. The day before the event, we will host a registration event wherein racers will come together, receive race maps, detailed information for spectators, pit crews and family to peruse. The day of the event, the race will begin at 7am and end at 7pm. Racers and teams will do continuous laps throughout the day. The course direction will not change. Volunteers will be staged throughout the race in order to assist riders, keep everyone on route at difficult intersections, etc., keep the medical team abreast of situations, maintain positive relationships amongst racers, etc.

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Course Designation

Although the details of the racecourse are only speculative at this point, this race could use any or all of the following trails located within Penitente Canyon Recreation Area:

- Blue Sky Loop
- Capulin Loop
- Dollhand Ravine
- Iglesia de San Juan
- Penitente Canyon Loop
- Penitente Canyon/Blue Sky
- Pinon
- Prospect (small intersectional use only)
- Rock Drops
- Ute Loop
- Wild Horse Loop
- Witches Canyon
- Unpaved Road
- New Trail Construction Will Be Necessary

Start and Finish Line Designations

Although the details of the Start and Finish lines are only speculative at this point, we assume we will have the race start and finish on North Witches Canyon Road. This allows the racers to spread out naturally and safely.

New Trail Construction

New trail construction will be located between the Iglesia de San Juan Parking Area and the Main Camping/Parking Area and along County Road 40G.

Aid Stations

Although the details of the Start and Finish lines are only speculative at this point, we know there will be three (3) Aid Stations throughout the course. We hope to place them at: the main Medic Tent, located near the Main Camping/Parking Area, a general aid station (water, gear, snacks) will be located between the Capulin Loop and Wagon Tracks intersection - about 3.5 miles into the race course, and the third will be a general aid station located at the Ute Loop Parking Area which will also have a medic on site.

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Passing Zone Designations

Passing Zones will be designated as:

- Penitente Canyon Road
- North Witches Canyon Road
- Sidewinder Canyon Road

Spectator Zone Designations

Area on the south side of North Witches Canyon Road and west side of CR38A La Garita Trailhead Parking Area Penitente Canyon Trailhead

Parking

Roadside Parking - CR41G and CR38A

Camping/Lodging

La Garita Trading Post has offered to host all campers, both tent and car. 10 campsites are to be reserved for race staff. Races like this often fill up nearby hotels and motels with family and friends of racers. The local hotels and motels are welcome to offer specials to entice racers to do just that. We look forward to having many lodging opportunities for racers and spectators to support the local economies of the San Luis Valley.

Volunteer Parking

Area on the south side of North Witches Canyon Road and west side of CR38A

Spectator Parking and Viewing Areas

Area on the south side of North Witches Canyon Road and west side of CR38A, La Garita Trailhead Parking Area, Penitente Canyon Trailhead (Start and Finish lines)

Safety Plan

Medic Stations

There will be two medic stations on the course, each staffed by at least two medical professionals. The lead medic station will be located near the start/finish line in the main campground area and the outlying medic station will be set up at the Ute Loop trailhead on the Side Winder Road approximately ½ way through the course. Each station will be equipped with appropriate first aid supplies and a radio to communicate with race director when needed. Both stations are located roadside and have reasonable vehicle access.

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Roving medic

In addition to the aid stations there will be one to two first responders roving the course. This will drastically reduce total response time in the event of an incident.

Helicopter Landing Zones

LZs will be identified in close proximity to each medic station. The course frequently moves over open ground offering plenty of ideal space for LZs. Lead medic will determine if air support is needed.

Nearby Medical Facilities

The nearest facility is the Rio Grande Hospital located at 310 County Road 14, Del Norte, Colorado 81132. We will inform the hospital about the race and our safety plan well in advance of the race and the week prior so that they are well aware. Additionally we will also communicate with the San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center located at 106 Blanca Ave, Alamosa, CO 81101 as an alternative medical facility.

EMS

We will work with both Saguache County EMS and Rio Grande County EMS so that both entities are informed and involved as much as they see fit.

Adverse Weather

October is usually a mild weather month in this part of the San Luis Valley however we will closely monitor the forecast and current conditions throughout race day. The race will continue through foul weather as long as conditions do not become unsafe because of lightning and/or flash floods. If there is a ground strike with in a reasonable distance (6 miles or less, 30 seconds from flash to crash) we will postpone the race for 30 minutes at which time we will re-evaluate and either continue the race or postpone for an additional 30 minutes at which time we will evaluate once again and decide whether or not to continue the race or cancel. We will ask the BLM race observer to work with the race director and staff to monitor trail conditions in the event of rain. If the trails become unreasonably damaged we will postpone the race for 30 minutes at which time we will re-evaluate and either continue the race or postpone for an additional 30 minutes at which time we will evaluate once again and decide whether or not to continue the race or cancel.

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