



# Highball to Thurmond Ultra & Relay 2026 Trailblazer Ambassador Program

## About the Program

The Highball Trailblazer Ambassador Program is more than a promotion team—it's a crew of runners, ruckers, and volunteers who believe in the spirit of this race and want to help it grow. Our Trailblazers are the heartbeat of the event: They share their journeys, welcome newcomers, and help spread the word in their local and online communities.

In 2026, we're doubling down on what makes this race special—**the adventure of the Gorge, the thrill of racing the train, and the community that forms on the trail**. Whether you're going after your first ultra, returning to beat the whistle, or lending your energy as a Volunteer Captain, we want your voice in the mix.

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## What We're Hoping to Accomplish

- Grow the race by reaching new runners, ruckers, and relay teams
- Build a strong, supportive, year-round community
- Amplify the different voices and stories that make this race unique
- Celebrate the real experiences behind the miles

- Connect athletes and volunteers across geographies, backgrounds, and goals
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## Who Should Apply?

We're looking for a diverse group of people who bring something unique to the Trailblazers:

- Veteran ultra runners who've seen it all
- Newer athletes taking on their biggest challenge yet
- Volunteer Aid Station Captains (new in '26)
- Participants at all distances: 50 Mile, 50K, and Relay
- Past participants who know and love the wild and wonderful of the Gorge
- Folks from all over the map—especially if you're in a region we haven't reached yet
- Returning Ambassadors who want to keep building the tradition they helped start

If you love Highball (or are about to), believe in community, and want to help others find their way to the start line—or your aid station—we want you.

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## Timeline & Logistics

- **Applications Open:** September 8, 2025
- **Applications Close:** September 21, 2025
- **Ambassadors Announced:** Week of September 29, 2025
- **Program Duration:** September 29, 2025 – May 22, 2026
- **Virtual Kickoff Meeting:** October 6, 2025

Communication will be mostly by email, so keep an eye out. You're always welcome to text with questions, ideas, or updates—this program is about building a real, supportive community, and staying in touch matters.

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## 2026 Trailblazer Requirements

### Race Participation

Ambassadors must participate in race weekend as either:

- A runner/rucker (any distance), or

- A Volunteer Aid Station Captain (description below).

## Social Media Expectations

You don't need to be a pro content creator—you just need to care about the experience and be willing to share it. We're not chasing followers; we're building a visible, connected community.

### Minimum Requirements

- Announce your Trailblazer status when selected (graphic + sample copy provided)
- Re-share November and February price increase reminders
- Re-share March and April volunteer registration posts
- Re-share the shirt and medal reveal posts
- Tag our account and use **#HighballToThurmond** and **#Trailblazers** in relevant posts
- Accept Instagram collaboration requests for important posts to improve reach

### Ongoing Engagement (Required; pick at least 2–3 across the season):

- Share why you signed up (or came back) to race, volunteer, or relay
- Highlight a training win or struggle
- Post about race prep (drop bags, gear, snacks, etc.)
- Introduce your relay team or aid station crew
- Share a story about what Highball means to you—whether you're racing or volunteering
- Shout out training partners, run clubs, or fellow Trailblazers
- Or whatever else feels meaningful!

We'll send you a Trailblazer Guide to help you brainstorm and story tell, and we'll spotlight standout posts on the official Highball channels.

## Online Community Engagement

One of the best ways to grow the race is outside our pages.

- Keep an eye on FB groups, Reddit threads, or Instagram posts where runners ask for race recs
- Suggest Highball when it fits (tag our account, no need to push)

- Share real, helpful advice about the course, vibe, or your experience  
We'll give you example replies to make it easy.

## Community Engagement & Visibility

- Share the race in your local club, run group, or store. We'll send flyers if you'd like. Word-of-mouth is powerful—help spread it IRL, not just online.
- You'll be invited to two optional virtual Q&A clinics hosted by Team Wicked Bonkproof and the RD on Jan. 6 and Apr. 28.

**Required:** Co-host the “Trail Talk: Highball Q&A Night” on **February 24, 2026**. This casual Zoom session helps welcome new participants and answer questions.

## Race Weekend Matters Most

Whether you're racing or volunteering, we want Ambassadors present and involved.

- Hang out at packet pickup
- Encourage everyone you encounter on the trails!
- Celebrate in Thurmond as runners beat the whistle

**Required:** Ambassadors must help at **Saturday Packet Pickup**. This is one of the most helpful things you can do—meeting athletes, calming nerves, and making the community feel connected. We'll take care of you with water, food, a chair - we won't have you on your feet!

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## Perks

All 2026 Trailblazers receive:

- Free race entry (any distance; volunteers can use for a future Trivium race)
- Personal discount code to share with friends, teammates, and your community
- Feature on the Highball website and social channels
- Free training plan from Team Wicked Bonkproof (volunteers can gift it if not needed)
- Earn Ambassador swag based on code usage and volunteers recruited

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## Volunteer Aid Station Captain Description

**Pre-Race:**

- Recruit 3+ volunteers per shift (yourself included)
- Join a short virtual training/Q&A call with RDs (about 1 month out)
- Coordinate with RDs to receive and transport your supplies
- Review the Athlete Guide and know your station's mileage, offerings, and cutoff rules
- Make a game plan for your station (theme optional, but encouraged—it sets the vibe!)

**Race Day:**

- Arrive early to set up tables, food, water, and signage
- Keep at least 3 people on duty at all times (rest and rotate as needed)
- Track runners in/out and enforce cutoffs if required
- Manage drop bags (if assigned to your station)
- Monitor supplies and radio/text if something runs low
- Be loud, encouraging, and high-energy—your station may be where someone decides to push on or drop out
- Coordinate relay handoffs smoothly
- Notify the RD when the first and last runner pass

**Post-Race:**

- Pack up gear neatly into tubs for pickup
- Join a short post-race Zoom debrief to share what worked and what could be better

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[Apply to be a 2026 Highball to Thurmond Trailblazer.](#)