

After Action Trailblazer 2023

By Leslie, KK6EKN

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The event went very well. We had enough operators to staff all the key points (see assignments and map). Many stations needed bicycles and we had enough. We met with Ross and medical staff at the start and exchanged phone numbers and agreed on how to contact each other. During the race operators called in when first and last runners passed their position. Net control was kept constantly busy with reports from the field. Reception was mostly good with 440 (see below for exceptions). One brand new ham was paired with an experienced ham, which worked well. We had cell phone numbers for everyone but didn't need to use them.

Net control had a mobile radio, 18 foot antenna and 500 watt hour battery, which worked fine (they used 8%). They also had a prepared 309 filled in with names and assignments for 'radio check' and 'on station', reports. There were an additional two 309 pages recording activity. Net control notified staff when the first 10 K runner passed mile marker 4, which staff appreciated knowing. As an extra, Net control had a spreadsheet to determine times between Mile Markers and Water Stops, which we could pass on to staff after the race so they could see lap times.

We took pictures of everyone at their posts (mostly) for posting on the K6MTV website.

----- for next time -----

Radios

Radio reception where the trail runs along the bay (MM2) is poor even with 440 due to a hill in the way, and a fence prevents climbing up the hill to get a higher antenna position.

Staffing for next time

Add a bike sweep for 3 mi walk. At minimum, send water stop 1 or 5K turn around operator there after the last 5K runner has passed.

Instructions for next time –

Instruct MM2 to sweep trail after 10K bike sweep has passed and let flaggers further along the course know the bib number of the last 10K runner so they'll know when they can be released.

5K turn around and water stop 1 can become rovers and patrol as needed after last 5k runner has passed. They could sweep the 3-mile walk, or sweep the 10K run in reverse.

Net Control

Bring a towel for wet table/chairs, and bring paper weights or blue tape to hold papers down on the table. Bring MTV ARES banner (if we have one by then).

Ask staff to put the canopy on the gravel area next year instead of the grass (reception is OK and feet won't get wet).

Before the race starts, find out staff phone numbers and meet with them to discuss how to communicate. (Rajiv, Ross, and medical/first aid)

Protection

Add suggestion to bring sunscreen and insect repellent. There were mosquitos at one place on the route.