

# THE MOUNTAINBACK REPORT

A MONTHLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2024 · ISSUE 01 · VOLUME 1



Photos by [Cate Bodner Photography](#).

## 21ST ANNUAL TUSSEY2WHIPPLE 11 MILER (TEASER #2)

Mike Casper

Low-40s temperatures and sunny skies greeted runners gathered at Tussey Mountain for this point-to-point celebration of Spring.

Dylan Cowell and Paul Wright dueled for overall supremacy in this race, and Cowell pulled away toward the end. Kaitlyn Spangler was just 3 minutes off the women's course record. Cowell and Spangler are husband and wife. Brian Thiede took third overall. Diane Swauger and Natasha Volkens took second and third in the women's category.

At least two registered runners ran the course in both directions, first running the 11 miles from Whipple Dam to Tussey Mountain before toeing the line at the race start. Kudos to Brian Thiede and John Iceland.

Huge thanks go to the families of the Centre Region Down Syndrome Society, who cheered and staffed the course's two water stops. CRDSS is the Tussey Mountainback's beneficiary this year.



## WHAT'S DOWN THE ROAD?

Those who run Tussey Teasers #1 through #5 (February's Teaser #0 was a bonus) will be eligible for a special prize drawing that will take place on June 23 after Teaser #5, the Eager Seeger Half Marathon.

The next Tussey Teaser is May 4, the (free) Beidleheimer Sidewinder 10K & 20K. The Sidewinder is an out-and-back race on Leg 4 of the 50-mile course, with start and finish at Whipple Dam State Park. The 20K distance includes the 1.6-mile hill on Beidleheimer Road.

[Sign Up for the Beidleheimer Sidewinder 10k&20K \(Click here\).](#)

## WHAT IS YOUR WHY? THIS IS MINE

Liz Bligan

I will be doing the Tussey Mountainback 50 Kilometer race on October 27, 2024. Why an ultramarathon on Tussey Mountain in Central PA? Well, a couple reasons -- first, all the road marathons that I would normally consider are already sold out and I can't get in. Second, my husband and son are ultramarathoners, and I have done two ultras, so I figure what the heck. This race is 31+ miles, with 3,200 feet of climb (and descent, but that hurts as much as the climb after a while!).

But this time it's even more personal and compelling. I've done marathons for LLS since 2011 in honor of my beloved sister-in-law, Sharon, who has a form of leukemia that used to be an all-but-guaranteed death sentence. She's alive and well today thanks to the research funding from LLS that helped create the drug she takes, Sprycel, which keeps her in permanent medical remission. This is what LLS does -- helps keep victims of leukemia and lymphomas alive.

Now, I'm also doing it for my beloved husband of 43 years, Kevin, who has Primary Central Nervous System Lymphoma. Who knew there was a brain lymphoma?? This is a form of lymphoma that kills very quickly if not attended to immediately. Luckily, he received great emergency care at Hershey Medical Center and continues with chemotherapy at Main Line Health and Penn. He's perfectly fine except for that brain cancer thing, but the chemo is taking its toll.

CNS lymphoma is rare, and there's not much research on it. I'd like to help raise money so that more research can be done and more treatments developed. This is the love of my life going through a terrible time, and I want to do something.

This event is an LLS "DIY," meaning I chose the event, chose the minimum fundraising goal, and am pretty much on my own as far as training. But train I will -- up and down the mounts in Valley Forge, and up and up on my treadmill for miles at an incline. My son will join me on some of those training outings, until he moves three hours away.

Donate to Liz here:

<https://pages.lls.org/tnt/epa/yourway24/lbligan#liz's-team-in-training-fundraiser>



## GIVING BACK TO THOSE WHO GIVE

Centre Region Down Syndrome Society -

Thanks for the donations in support of the Centre Region Down Syndrome Society!

Donations can be made at any of the Tussey Teaser races or online on the beneficiary page of the Mountainback's website, [www.tusseymountainback.com/](http://www.tusseymountainback.com/)

Sneakers4Funds -

Runners are encouraged to bring gently used running shoes to be collected at each run for a program called Sneakers4Funds that supports micro-entrepreneurs in communities and countries around the world. Proceeds coming back to the race go to support the Centre Region Down Syndrome Society.



For more information on the Tussey Mountainback visit [our website by clicking here](#)

