

Creede Donkey Races 2018

Donkeys! Of all shapes and sizes, and none of them overweight. Early Saturday morning, they and their people were gathering in cool Creede, Colorado. Many had arrived the day before, but additional trailers with their brethren arrived periodically all morning. By 11 a.m., over fifty donkeys were assembled to take their respective 2-leggers out for a good jog: 10 miles over picturesque Forest Service roads, climbing and descending 3000 feet, to finish their outing in the middle of Main Street. This was the second annual Creede Donkey Dash.

Standards and Mammoths were required to carry a minimum pack weight of 33 pounds, but as long as the Miniatures had the requisite items (gold pan, pick, shovel) there was no weight requirement for them. But the pack needed to arrive along with their runners at the finish line. The donkeys all knew the drill--they'd been training for weeks--but some of their humans were a little fuzzy on how to operate, fussing with packs and not sure whether to run in front or behind. It hardly mattered, since the race was won or lost on the nose of each donkey crossing the finish, not its human.

The milling group stood for what seemed an eternity while an announcer droned on about the Western Pack Burro Association (<http://www.packburroracing.com/>). Then there was some effort to all face the same direction, a starting gun was fired, and the whole pack cantered or trotted smartly down Main Street for the start of the loop, leaving a fine trail of neatly deposited nuggets in their wake.

Barely an hour-and-a-half later the first group to return pelted back down Main Street, two minis and a Mammoth, followed closely by a standard donkey. The humans looked pretty tired, sweaty and sagging to stoop with their hands on knees, but the donkeys simply looked content to stop in the shade, scarcely breathing hard. A few minutes later, the next small group of donkeys brought their humans back. And so it went for about forty-five minutes, the donkeys greeting each other again as their buddies returned.

Some of the humans seemed mighty pleased about the envelopes handed out at the end, but all the donkeys were happy about the snacks and attention. It was a delightful day for participants and onlookers!

By Karen Denison

