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Run Wild Missoula Agrees to Drop Discriminatory Rules  
Resolves Complaint Filed By Local Athlete.

Missoula, MT--- On January 22nd, a state hearing officer granted Run Wild Missoula's request that judgment be entered against it in a discrimination complaint filed by local Missoula athlete Joe Stone. The order requires Run Wild Missoula to allow people with disabilities who use hand cycles or racing wheelchairs to participate in the Missoula Marathon and prohibits them from implementing discriminatory rules, including greatly limiting the speed of these athletes for almost the whole second half of the marathon and requiring that they yield to all other racers. It also must provide its board of directors and executive director at least two hours of training on the Montana Human Rights Act, with an emphasis in providing accommodations for people with disabilities. Finally it must pay Mr. Stone \$13,000 for the damages caused to him through its discriminatory practices.

"I'm very pleased that we have finally resolved this issue so people with disabilities can be full participants in all phases of the Missoula Marathon," said Stone. "This is an incredible weight off my shoulders. This is all I ever wanted to accomplish when I first contacted Run Wild Missoula in 2012."

Stone began trying to work with staff at Run Wild Missoula three years ago after learning that the Missoula Marathon did not allow people who use racing wheelchairs or hand cycles in the full marathon. Stone experienced a spinal cord injury in 2010 and uses assistive technology to compete in triathlons, marathons, and other races across the U.S.

"I never wanted to initiate legal action, but at a certain point I had to acknowledge the unfair way in which people with disabilities were being treated. I spent several years trying to educate, collaborate, and participate in what Run Wild Missoula calls 'an inclusive race for all participants.' I just could not sit by and have myself and others treated like second-class citizens. We are part of the community and we have the right to fully participate in our community like anyone else."

Through Stone's advocacy and public pressure, Run Wild Missoula belatedly agreed to allow racing wheelchairs and hand cycles in the full marathon in 2014, only a month prior to the race, but still imposed discriminatory rules on wheeled participants. Stone, represented by Disability Rights Montana, argued that those rules were discriminatory, and an investigator from the Montana Human Rights Bureau agreed in July 2015. The case was set for hearing in February 2016.

"It is unfortunate that it took so much time and effort to be treated equally, but I am very pleased with the outcome," Stone added. "Not only will disabled athletes be treated equally in the Missoula Marathon, but this case can now be used as a tool for other athletes across the country who are struggling with similar issues. Inclusive races and events across the country are the ultimate goal, and our case puts us all one push closer to that outcome for everyone."