

OUTDOORS



PHILIP A. DWYER THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

Members of the Buy Fresh team pull their kayak out of Bellingham Bay at Cornwall Avenue Saturday during the final leg of the annual Bellingham Traverse. Charlie Maliszewski, left, was dressed as a mountain-biking egg plant and Scott Pelton was a kayaking potato. Buy Fresh is a nonprofit group that supports buying local produce.

Traverse runs across town

Hundreds take part

KIRA MILLAGE

THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

Close to 400 people ran, biked and paddled their way around Bellingham Saturday as part of the fourth annual Bellingham Traverse, a multisport relay.

"I really love seeing people out being active and having such a good time doing it," said Jill Heckathorn, 52, of Bellingham.

She and hundreds of others packed Lake Padden Park to watch part of the six-leg event, which drew teams and people of all ages, shapes and sizes.

"I really appreciate the range of teams," she said. "It really feels like anyone interested can participate."

The Bellingham Traverse is a race that can be done solo, in pairs, or as a team, and includes running, mountain biking, road biking, kayaking and trail running.

"I wanted to create an event in Bellingham that heightened awareness, increased outdoor activity and community participation," said Todd Elsworth, the creator of the event.

The race, unlike Ski to Sea, is run completely within Bellingham and simulates the life cycle of salmon, Elsworth said.

"The grand plan is to have it become the Fourth Corner Salmon Festival and have the Traverse be the race aspect of it," he said.

Local and regional nonprofit groups had information booths at the Bellingham Farmers Market, where the start and finish line for the race are located. Last year, those local groups raised more than \$30,000 for their own use.

"I'm very proud of it," Elsworth said. "It's just a great reflection of the community of people we have here."

"I love events like this that bring people out to do healthy things and cheer people on," said Danielle Kramer, 37, of

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Bellingham. She was watching her team's hand-off for the bike legs at Lake Padden before she had to compete in the trail run.

"Everyone's excited," said her husband, Michael Kramer, 27. "It's such a community event."

Ryan Sheaffer looked excited as he finished the mountain-bike leg and immediately collapsed to the ground with a laugh.

"It's always fun when it's finished and you have a sense of accomplishment," the 29-year-old said. "You start off with a shot of adrenaline and just want to pass a couple people... then 30 seconds into it, it's just let me survive this thing."

He and his team came up from Seattle for the event and plan on doing it again next year.

"It's fun, it's a good time with friends," he said.

OUTDOORS

Duplicate Padden events cause some headaches

KIRA MILLAGE

THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

This year was the first year the Bellingham Traverse was held on Labor Day weekend, causing some slight headaches for the organizers of the Lake Padden Relay, a trail run.

"They should have had an hour more separation," said Bill Roe, one of the organizers of the relay. "We also didn't do a good enough job of warning all the normal lake patrons."

Spectators for the events were in different parts of the park, but the runners used the same trail, running in opposite directions.

"The trails are wide, they can go by and high-five them," said

Danny Anderson, one of the race directors.

The Lake Padden Relay, organized by the Greater Bellingham Running Club, has been going on for 28 years and runners have always been at the same place and time, said the organizers.

"We don't want to change things after all these years," said Dick Ryan, a race director for 23 years. "We have teams coming from Seattle."

Spectators for both events said parking was an issue, but people went with the flow.

"It provided some nice mingling of the crowds," said Maggie Kinsella, 48, a participant in the Traverse.

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