

# Navigating Adventure

## Q&A with Steve Andrus, XTERRA's Americas Tour Manager

Photos courtesy XTERRA

In the world of off-road triathlon and trail running, XTERRA stands as a beacon for adventure enthusiasts across the globe. The XTERRA universe spans three world regions: Asia Pacific, EMEA (Europe, the Middle East, and Africa), and the Americas.

We had the opportunity to chat with Steve Andrus, the leader at the helm of XTERRA's Americas Tour operations, to discuss the essence of XTERRA, his role, and the significant impact these epic events will have on the communities when they come to western Maine this summer.

### Return to Sugarloaf

**Q:** The Trail Run World Championship returns to Sugarloaf Mountain on Labor Day Weekend. What excites you about this venue?

**A:** Sugarloaf is a special place for us. The trails there are nothing short of world-class, offering a mix of challenging terrain, stunning views, and the unparalleled beauty of Maine's moun-

tains and forests. It's an ideal setting for both elite athletes and casual runners, providing a diverse landscape that truly tests the limits of all who tread its paths. This year, we're excited to return and continue our tradition of adventure and feature the top qualifying athletes from around the globe. These participants will experience the magic of Sugarloaf and vie for the title of our next Trail Running champion in an unforgettable setting.

### The Essence of XTERRA

**Q:** What can you tell us about the essence of XTERRA's brand?

**A:** XTERRA isn't just about the race events; it's a celebration of community, adventure, and the great outdoors. Sustainability is a core value we live by. Our tagline is: "We play, we protect." We take pride in that motto, while promoting the discovery of self, trail systems, and the unknown. Our events are designed to be inclusive, immersive festivals that challenge



athletes and bring them into close contact with the local culture and landscape. For us, the mission is clear: to showcase the energy, the vibe, and the essence of each location, providing an unforgettable experience that



resonates with our participants and the local communities alike. With adventure, challenge, discovery, community, and sustainability as our guiding principles, we aim to leave a positive footprint wherever we go.

## Impact on the Community

**Q:** What have you discovered about the community impact of hosting an XTERRA event?

**A:** Hosting an XTERRA event is a transformative experience for any community. It's about more than just an economic boost; it's about inspiring a sense of unity and shared adventure. We actively engage local vendors, providing free spaces to showcase their products and services and offer ample volunteer opportunities as well. Our goal is to create a sustainable event that not only brings excitement and awareness to the area but also encourages environmental stewardship and community involvement. It's a mutually beneficial relationship that enriches both the XTERRA family and the host location.

**Q:** As Americas Tour Manager, tell us about your role at XTERRA that spans from Canada to South America:

**A:** Absolutely. At its core, my role is about forging connections and fostering partnerships. I work hand in hand with the people in local communities to not only host these world-class events but also to integrate them seamlessly into the fabric of the locale. I enjoy building these relationships within local communities like Carra-basset Valley, with statewide tourism

boards, and other regional hospitality partners. I am grateful to work with Sheila Brennan Nee, Maine Sports Commission and with members of Sugarloaf's team to create a collaborative experience. This event is more than just a race; it's an exciting festival-like atmosphere with local community engagement. I find it a thrilling challenge to introduce these communities to the world of XTERRA and vice versa. At the end of the day, it is about promoting the growth and visibility of all the partnerships, brands, and stakeholders involved, which has been fun for me!

## Festivities Beyond the Race

**Q:** Besides the Championship events, what fun weekend festivities can spectators and participants expect?

**A:** The XTERRA experience extends far beyond the starting line. We kick things off on Saturday, August 31 at 9 a.m. with an 8K Community Trail Run that is perfect for family, friends, and those living in the region who want to experience a smaller-scale trail run adventure on the Carrabassett Valley trails.

This is followed by a free Kids' Fun Run at noon, which is a short journey around Sugarloaf's resort. Kids will be split into appropriate, short sprints based on age. These events set the stage for the Half and Full Marathon championship distances on Sunday and a weekend filled with local showcases, live music, an awards dinner, and a vibrant expo. There will also

be clinics on nutrition, recovery, and trail running, ensuring participants are well equipped for the challenges ahead. This amazing venue provides the breathtaking backdrop and the amenities of Sugarloaf, from lift rides and disc golf, to zip-lining. It's a holistic approach to the race weekend, inviting participants to be fully immersed in the XTERRA lifestyle.

## An Invitation to Explore

**Q:** What would you say to trail running enthusiasts considering the XTERRA Trail Run World Series?

**A:** To anyone contemplating the XTERRA Trail Run World Series, I say: "Come and join us." This is your invitation to explore the most idyllic running locations on the planet, connect with a community of like-minded adventurers, and challenge yourself in ways you never thought possible. Whether aiming for the podium or simply looking to experience the beauty of trail running in a new light, XTERRA has something for you. It's more than a race; it's a journey, and we can't wait to welcome you to our global family. 🌍

*Steve Andrus and the XTERRA team are deeply committed to creating events that are more than just races. They are experiences that celebrate the spirit of adventure, community, and the natural beauty of our world. FMI on XTERRA visit: <https://www.xterraplanet.com/> and to contact, email: [trailrun@xterraplanet.com](mailto:trailrun@xterraplanet.com). Follow them on their socials: XTERRATrailrun on Instagram and Facebook.*