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USATF Mountain Ultra Trail Running Council Announces 2007 Award Recipients

Colorado Springs ---The Mountain Ultra Trail (MUT) Council of long distance running has chosen the 2007 USATF Mountain Runners of the Year, Ultrarunners of the Year, and Contributors of the Year. The following will receive their awards at the annual USATF National Convention in Honolulu, Hawaii on Saturday, December 1 at an awards breakfast.

Rickey Gates, 26, Boulder, CO, is the mountain runner of the year. This is the first time Gates has received this award. He had a stellar year winning the USA Mountain Champs and USA Trail (10km) Champs on back-to-back weekends in June, and made his second consecutive Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team. Gates raced extensively on the European Mountain Running Circuit this past summer with his best finish, a fourth place at the WMRA Grand Prix event Grossglockner in Austria. He finished 57th at the World Mountain Running Trophy as part of the ninth-place U.S. team.

Simon Gutierrez, 41, Alamosa, CO, is a repeat winner of the masters mountain runner of the year honors. Gutierrez made his sixth consecutive Teva U.S. Mountain Team with his second place finish at the USA 10km Trail Championships in Steamboat Springs where he won the masters title. He was first master at the Mount Washington Road Race where he finished in third position overall. He was the overall winner at the La Luz Hill Climb. He won the WMRA World Masters Mountain Running Championships in Bludenz, Austria in September, one week after the World Mountain Running Trophy where he placed 65th. He works at the San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center as an outpatient manual /orthopedic physical therapist and works closely with the Adams State men's and women's cross country and track teams.

Christine Lundy, 37, Sausalito, CA, is the women's mountain runner of the year. Lundy was the USA Trail Champion at Steamboat Springs, CO, and with the win made her third consecutive Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team. She placed second at the USA Mountain Championships, was first at the NACAC Mountain Running Championships, and finished seventh at the Mt Obudu Mountain Race (Nigeria). Lundy placed eighth and was the second scoring team member for the Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team at the World Mountain Running Trophy and with her teammates won the gold medal for the second year in a row. Lundy also directed the Mt. Tam Trophy Race which served as the final mountain team selection race. She is a veterinarian in San Francisco.

Anita Ortiz, 43, Eagle, CO, is the masters mountain runner of the year having also won the award in 2004. As the USA Mountain Running Champion, Ortiz made her record fifth Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team. This mother of four was also the overall female champion at the very competitive Teva Mountain Games 10Km in Vail, and was the masters USA 50 Mile Trail Champion at White River 50 Miler. Ortiz is an elementary school teacher and serves on the USATF Mountain Ultra Trail Council.

Greg Crowther, 34, Seattle, WA, is the ultrarunner of the year. Crowther was the USA National 50km Champion setting a course record of 3:04:35. He was the USA 100km Road Champion running 7:14:31, placed second at Miwok 100km trail, finished in eleventh place to score for the bronze-medal winning USA 100km Team at the IAU World Cup in The Netherlands running 6:52:52, first place and course record at Bridle Trails 50km, and first place at SunMart 50 Miler in 5:37:36. Crowther is on the faculty at the University of Washington, where he is acting lecturer in the Department of Chemical Engineering. He graduated from Williams College in Vermont in 1995 with a degree in biology and earned a Ph.D. in Physiology & Biophysics from the University of Washington.

Roy Pirrung, 59, Sheboygan, WI, is the masters ultrarunner of the year. Pirrung dominated his age group in most every race he entered. He finished 1st at the 24-hour national championships, second at Sunmart Texas Trail Endurance 50-mile, second at the USA 50km Road Championships, first at the USA 100km National Road Championships in an American Record time, first at the Ice Age Trail 50 miler, second at the USA 100km National Masters Trail Championships, fourth at the USA 50km Trail Championships, third at the IAU World Cup Masters 100km Road event, breaking his own American Record, and was first master at the USA 50 Mile Road Championships and the Door County Fall 50-miler. Pirrung organizes the USA 24 Hour Team and also has been a member of the team for the past six years.. He is a fitness trainer at Sports Core for Kohler Company and is the Vice Chair of the USATF Mountain Ultra Trail Council.

Nikki Kimball, 36, Bozeman, MT, is a repeat winner of the ultrarunner of the year award. Kimball finished first in course record time at the Spokane River 50km Race, finished second at Miwok 100km, first at Western States 100 Miler setting a course record, and finished first in course record time at the Ultra Tour Du Mont Blanc. She was also winner of Mount Masochist. Kimball, like Crowther, is a graduate of Williams College. She is a physical therapist in Livingston, Montana.

Beverly Anderson-Abbs, 43, Red Bluff, CA, is the masters ultrarunner of the year. Anderson-Abbs finished first at the Muir Beach 50km, finished first at the Costa Rica Coastal Challenge, first masters and course record at the Way Too Cool Race, first place and course record at the Pony Express 50km, second place at the Peterson Ridge Rumble, first place and course record at the Diablo 50 Miler, third place at Miwok 100km, first place and course record at the Mt Diablo 50km, second place at Western States 100 Miler, second place at Where's Waldo 100km, National Champion at the USA 50km Trail Championships, and first place at the Whiskeytown 50km which served as the Pacific Association USATF championship.

Contributors of the Year: The White Mountain Milers Running Club is the Mountain Running Contributor of the Year. The Milers hosted the USA Mountain Running Championships and was very supportive of the USA mountain running program and the USATF New England Mountain Running Circuit. The Mad City 100km Road Race is the Ultrarunning Contributor of the Year. The event, directed by Tim Yanacheck, hosted the USA 100km Road Championships and served as a selection race for the USA 100km Team. The event earned the prestigious designation as a bronze IAU event. Other nominees in the Contributor of the Year category included *Running Times* magazine, Teva, Windermere Real Estate, Fleet Feet Sports Boulder. Past winners in this category include the American Ultra Running Association, Teva, North Texas Trail Runners, and La Sportiva/GoLite.

In order to be considered for the USATF Mountain and Ultrarunning awards an athlete must show top results in U.S. competitions for 2007 (November 1, 2006 through October 31, 2007) to include mountain races (these may be on paved/gravel surfaces as long as there is significant elevation loss or gain) and trail races of varying lengths, as well as road races for the ultra category (distances beyond the marathon). International results are also considered. The nominee must be an ambassador for the sport. Nominee must be a USATF member for 2007 and to be considered for the masters category, athlete must be a minimum of 40 years of age.

For a list of past winners in the other categories, please visit www.usatf.org.

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