



February 7, 2023

For immediate release

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Mt Sentinel Endurance Event Seeks to Bring Cleaner Air **Runner's Edge & Climate Smart Missoula partner to improve local air quality**

Missoula, MT—Missoula's third annual Running Up for Air (RUFA) challenge kicks off this Saturday, February 11! This unique mountain-endurance event offers runners and hikers an opportunity to put their energy to use in building healthier communities with cleaner air.

Organized by The Runner's Edge, RUFA supports Climate Smart Missoula's efforts to improve local air quality, indoors and out. Participants can choose their own adventure, summiting Mt Sentinel any number of times for 3, 6 or 12 hours, all with the goal of raising awareness and funding for clean air initiatives.

"Despite amazing outdoor access in Missoula, people are often forced inside due to poor air quality caused by summer wildfire smoke and winter inversions," said race director Jeff Mogavero. "It's fun to connect outdoor enthusiasts with the air we breathe every day. Tackling air quality issues is a mountain of a challenge, so why not climb a mountain all day in the winter to bring awareness to that!"

Last year the event had almost 100 participants, ages 14 to 70, and raised over \$15,000. Funding from RUFA supports Climate Smart Missoula's initiatives to provide vulnerable individuals and community groups with portable air purifiers for use during wildfire smoke season. The event also supports [Electrify Missoula](#) and collaborative efforts to implement Missoula County's *Climate Ready Missoula* plan.

"We know wildfire smoke is an increasing health issue and this event helps catalyze awareness and solutions," said Climate Smart Missoula's Executive Director, Amy Cilimburg. "We also know that indoor air can be unhealthy at anytime of the year, especially if methane gas appliances are in use."

Cilimburg is signed up for a 12-hour stint on Sentinel this Saturday and likens the challenge to her work on climate change.

“It can be daunting to look ahead at the summit and all we need to accomplish to solve the climate crisis,” said Cilimburg. “So instead, we focus on taking the next step, then the next, until solutions gain traction.”

Everyone is welcome to [sign up for RUFA this Saturday](#) for a duration and intensity level of their choice. More information and online registration can be found on the RUFA Mt. Sentinel website: <https://www.runnersedgemt.com/events/rufa/>.

Additional event sponsors include Sapphire Physical Therapy, Anastasia Wilde, Heritage Timber, Flanagan Motors, and Throw Ceramics.

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Professional photographs from the 2020 and 2022 RUFA are available for use free of charge. Contact Jeff Mogavero.

RUFA began in 2012 to mobilize people living along the Wasatch Front in and around Salt Lake City to take action to improve the quality of their winter air. Now in its 11th year, RUFA has grown to include over 500 participants who traverse thousands of miles and ascend hundreds of thousands of vertical feet, while raising tens of thousands of dollars to support the work and advocacy of nonprofits dedicated to improving air quality. In 2023, all RUFA events combined hope to raise over \$100,000 for clean air and climate awareness.