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On Running

## Mike Sandrock: Boulder-area races aim for healthy people, healthy Earth

By Mike Sandrock, For the Camera  
Posted: 04/19/2011 11:04:31 PM MDT

### If you go

**What:** Boulder Distance Classic 15K and 5K

**When:** 8:30 a.m. Saturday

**Where:** Boulder Reservoir

**More info:**  
[distanceclassic.com](http://distanceclassic.com)

### If you go

**What:** Earth Day 5K Run/Walk

**When:** 10 a.m. May 1

**Where:** University of Colorado Research Park

**More info:**  
[conservationcenter.org](http://conservationcenter.org)

Doug Yetman's eyes lit up on a cool, spring afternoon as he began talking about the upcoming Earth Day 5K Run/Walk.

"We want to make this into the greenest race possible," Yetman said, while sitting outside the Trident Cafe in downtown Boulder. Yetman, development director for Earth Day 5K organizer Center for ReSource Conservation, has a goal of continuing making the race into an event "where folks can integrate the concepts of healthy lifestyles with those of a healthy Earth."

Healthy lifestyle/healthy Earth? Sounds like a perfect fit for Boulder. As we chatted, electric cars from Tesla were on display across the street. Groups of fit-looking young people walked by, one guy wearing a pair of "barefoot shoes." Inside the coffee shop, entrepreneurs plugged away on laptops. One of those, Scott Gwozdz, a local sustainability consultant and University of Colorado business school lecturer, gave some props to our local running races and those of you who enter them.



Mike Sandrock

Choosing to spend your entry fees dollars on "green events," Gwozdz said, "is connecting the dots between your personal lifestyle and interests to the bigger world. It involves everything from your energy use to transportation habits, food choices, so

that it all lines up. In Boulder, we are doing it."

And races are a key part of that. The Bolder Boulder, Saturday's Boulder Distance Classic, the Neder Nederland, the downtown and county race series, and now the Earth Day 5K, have all helped push along the green movement. By promoting recycling and reusing, these races "stand for principles that align with your sustainable-oriented mindset," said Gwozdz, who then excused himself to run up Mount Sanitas while pushing his kid in a stroller.

Rich Castro, founder of the Boulder Road Runners, has been racing since 1961 and ran his first road race back in the early 1970s. Castro said the green movement at races evolved for a simple reason: "Everyone has become aware of the tremendous waste that huge events produce."

The Bolder Boulder, one of the first of the nation's mega-races and one of the largest races in the world, was an early adapter of cutting down on waste, back when founder Steve Bosley was still race director.

Bosley, now a CU regent, brought a businessman's organizational skills to race recycling. Now, the Bolder Boulder recycles as efficiently as its waves go off; last year, the Bolder Boulder recycled 12.65 tons of various materials; donated more than 4,000 pairs of Crocs, as well as race T-shirts and lunch bags to different humanitarian groups; and gave nearly three tons of leftover food to Community Food Share.

The Bolder Boulder also works on what it calls "supply-chain management" to cut down on the amount of packaging that needs to be unwrapped and shipped.

Yetman, a relative newcomer to Colorado, is indicative of the new breed of event organizers who are building on what Bosley, Henry Guzman of the Boulder Distance Classic, the Longmont Sunrise Stampede's Peter Richards and other long-time race directors have been quietly pushing for years -- doing good by putting on well-run, efficient events.

Yet with all the many local races, some of which have been around for decades, Yetman has the lofty goal of developing the Earth Day run/walk into "The Greenest 5K in Boulder." He said the Earth Day race -- which is not held on Earth Day but rather May 1 -- is a way for the center to "practice what we preach," with the center "redoubling" its efforts to put on a green event. This year, that includes partnering with the state's Colorado Carbon Fund to buy carbon offsets and using HydraPouches instead of paper cups at water stations.

HydraPouches, invented by Boulder's Craig McSavaney, will also be on hand at the May 15 Kaiser Permanente Colfax Marathon in Denver. The Colfax Marathon added another nice green twist this year by giving free RTD bus tickets to relay teams racing the marathon, so runners can get back to the finish line in Denver's City Park. Each relay leg exchange area is right near a bus stop.

All the many efforts races are making to go green are helpful, the Road Runners' Castro said. In the end, however, what matters most about the greening of races are the people involved.

"People are the intangible factor -- they need to cooperate and think about their impact," he said.

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