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Marathoners combine distance running and sight-seeing

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Mark Garcia, left, of Amarillo, an unidentified runner and Marck Bonderud enjoy a marathon jog running at Ute Lake Saturday. They took part in the Mainly Marathon races at Ute Lake State Park on Saturday and Conchas Lake State Park on Sunday.



Parvaneh Moayedi of San Antonio is competing to be the first woman to run 1,000 marathons.

By Steve Hansen

QCS Managing Editor

Run a marathon. See a park.

That was the formula for having fun Saturday and Sunday for a hardy group of vacationers who combined long-distance runs with sight-seeing at Ute Lake and Conchas Lake state parks.

Sponsored by Mainly Marathons, a Las Cruces company that caters nationwide series of marathon vacations, the weekend runs at Quay County's favorite lakeside parks drew more than 50 runners from all over the nation and one from Australia.

At Ute Lake on Saturday, the ultra-fit aficionados even saw a part of the state park that most visitors can't reach. State Park officials opened a dirt road in front the dam that is closed to visitors. The road winds down a canyon, fords the Canadian River at its narrowest point, then climbs the canyon to South Shore Drive in Logan, a route that passes waterfalls and cliffs that are usually closed off.

The runners paid \$90 to \$140 each for each day's runs, which also included meals, mid-route snacks, water, coffee and even chocolate milk prepared by mobile kitchen chef Norm Duesterhoeft to energize the runners on their 13.1-mile half-marathon and 26.2-mile full marathon jaunts along the dams.

Clint Burrelson, who owns Mainly Marathons, is no mere observer. He ran full marathons on both days, pausing between laps to talk to clients and reporters.

The Ute and Conchas lake runs, he said, are part of Mainly Marathons' New Mexico Parks series. Later, the series will include races at Sugarite Canyon and Eagle Nest state parks in northern New Mexico.

One of last weekend's participants, however, is on her way to marathon history. She is Parvaneh Moagedi, 51, of San Antonio, Texas, who added marathon 696 to her record Sunday at Conchas after running a full marathon Saturday at Ute Lake.

"I want to be the first female to run 1,000 marathons," she said Saturday.

She has been running marathons for 16 years, she said, and training for 20.

While she has been running, she has maintained a career at Hewlett-Packard and Compaq computers and raised two daughters, one of whom is an obstetrician; the other, a scientist at Columbia University in New York City.

She retired from HP two years ago, she said, and now works part time marketing Core Power, a health drink produced by the Coca-Cola Co.

After she interviewed with the Quay County Sun on Saturday, she headed off to run the second half of her day's marathon run.

Sue Parrotte, Arlington, Va., is another regular who ran full marathons on both days.

Her nickname is "Speedy Sue," because she's usually one of the first to finish first laps in the marathon grind.

She runs, she said, "because I have the wiggles and I love to run."

Because of the Mainly Marathons tours, she said, "I see places I wouldn't normally get to see."

"I wouldn't have come to the New Mexico state parks without the run," she said, "but they're gorgeous."

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