

# Lindsey Roberts Supported FKT R2R Trail Story

In April 2021, I set the supported Fastest Known Time for the 157-mile River to River Trail in 2 days, 17 hours, 35 minutes. It was one heck of a journey. Below is my report of the experience. It's long, but it was a really long run!

Here is the video I made about the 1st day. It's my first attempt at a video, and taking so many photos and videos was hard while running so far. Please be kind.

<https://youtu.be/YjHS6AgCUDM>

## Race Report: R2R Trail Fastest Known Time Lindsey Roberts

The River to River trail winds through 157 miles of southern Illinois from the Mississippi River in Elizabethtown, Illinois, to the Ohio River in Grand Tower, Illinois. Most of the route is single track trail, but it also includes fire roads, gravel roads, and paved roads while climbing about 17,500ft (according to my Coros Global Apex). The trail is rocky, rooty, minimally maintained, and also used by horses, so it makes for a very challenging run (dodging horse hoofprints and manure in various states of solidity).

Many races were cancelled in 2020, resulting in a rise in popularity of FKT (Fastest Known Time) – get from start to finish as fast as you can. There are two main types of FKTs: supported (you can have help along your journey) and unsupported (absolutely no assistance outside of what you are carrying at the start aside from natural water sources). Several members of the River to River Runners, the best running club ever, mentioned an FKT of the River to River Trail. Wait, what? Was it even possible to survive the entire thing? I looked up the current supported FKT: 3 days, 11 hours, 48 minutes claimed by Matt Halfar in 2016. There was no claimed female supported FKT, so to claim one, I'd just have to finish the 157 miles. Maybe I could do that? I talked it over with my coach (well, half coach...I'm half coach and he's half coach), Mike West, and he said it was doable. He told me I could beat the men's supported FKT. Maybe? The more I thought about it, the more I wanted to attempt it.

I feel like I did not have a good year trail running last year. I had several bad falls, some nagging injuries, and my pelvis broke while running the Shawnee Hills 100-miler last August (yep, still finished). I didn't start a single race pain-free. This 157 miles was definitely about the FKT, but it was also about getting to the start healthy, happy, and feeling strong again. It was about embracing my love for trail running and invalidating my fears that I was too breakable to continue running endurance events. The R2R is a beast of a run. If I could do this, I could do anything.

I prepped by running every trail section of the R2R and driving the road sections. There are some difficult sections to follow, and trail markers are sometimes infrequent. If I made a major error, I wanted it to be in training, not during the FKT attempt. I made A LOT of errors in training. Based on my training runs, I planned to cover 50-55 miles per day, eat a ton of

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calories, then sleep for 6 hours (repeat for the second night). I would run East to West. As mentioned in the River to River Trail Society's Trail Guide, this is the traditional direction, meant to follow the expansion of settlers through Illinois. My goal was to finish in 2 days and 15 hours, which would give me a plushy cushion to finish under the previous FKT (3 days, 11 hours, 48 minutes) even if something went terribly wrong.

I camped (out of my truck) at Whoopie Cat Lake the night before the start. As usual before a big effort, I did not sleep well, but I did enjoy listening to the night sounds by the lake. The morning of the start was cool, and the wind by the Ohio River was whipping! I took some photos, did the traditional Ohio River toe tap, and got some last-minute instructions from Coach Mike: Relax, enjoy the trail, and focus on one day at a time. I felt nervous and excited, but I never doubted that I could do this. Mentally and physically, I was in a healthy, happy place. I was happy to be here. I started my watch: 7:06am. The first mile is paved and transitions to gravel farm road. I said "Good MOOOOrning!" to the cows, relaxing into an easy pace, knowing that a big, gnarly climb would greet me as soon as I got on the first trail section. I walked the steep parts of climbs. My feet stayed dry until about 4 ½ miles in, when I hit a branch of Big Creek. It was gorgeous, but I couldn't find a way across without taking up a lot of time. I reminded myself to keep my feet in mind. It was imperative they stay in good condition.

Ten miles in, I was looking for morel mushrooms while running, and I toed a root. WHAMMY! Fall #1 at 10 miles. The fall was nice and soft on a dirt trail covered in pine needles. Even if it was morel season, this was a good wake-up call – don't look for mushrooms while running for the next three days! I vowed not to look for morels again, but this was a battle. If you haven't tasted a delicious, meaty morel, you won't understand this struggle. It's a good thing I had Dan's Protein Bars (made with love in southern Illinois) to keep my mind off of morels – I'd already eaten two bars!

Other than the brief encounter with the ground, things went smoothly for the first half marathon. The forest was coming alive for spring. I had run these trails over winter, and the abundance of wildflowers and butterflies was a wonderful sight. I was nervous approaching High Knob. I had heard there would be about 600 mules there, and I was worried about how chewed up the trail would be. Approaching the horseback camp, the trail was in runnable condition save for a few large mud holes I had to scoot around. I was relieved. However, running into camp did involve a controlled skid down a steep, muddy, rocky hill, but there were no whammies! High Knob was hopping as I ran through. Animals (horses, mules, dogs, humans) everywhere! The activity was a welcome contrast to pandemic times.

The trail between High Knob and the backpacker's parking lot at Garden of the Gods was one of the most difficult sections of my journey. The trail was destroyed in some areas, a good deal more than it was when I previously ran this section a few weeks prior. If I wasn't trying to skirt around large mud holes, walk through ankle-deep pulverized poop porridge,

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or run on/in horse hoof prints (think ankle turning/twisting constantly), I was diverting off trail for riders. Most were very friendly. They usually asked how far I was running, and I would say "157 miles, to the end of the trail." I gained satisfaction at their faces as they processed my answer. Several responded "You want a ride?", tempting, very tempting! Some just said "Holy cow!" or added an expletive or two 😊. They brought a lot of positive energy to the trail, and I was glad to meet them. Although there was no way to get in a groove, and I struggled with this arrhythmic running, there were some lovely blufftop views and rock formations (Buzzard's Point) that made me smile from ear to ear. In the distance, I thought I saw a person looking down from a tree – it was too early for hallucinations! It turned out to be an interestingly formed tree branch that did indeed look like a man looking down – nature is so cool.

I changed my shoes for the first time at 20 miles. This is atypical. Usually, I would at least try to run in the same pair for a 50K, but they were full of liquified poop. Coach pretty much insisted I do a sock and shoe change earlier than planned to protect my feet. Good call – remember, protect the feet.

The trail improved significantly after the backpacker's parking lot. However, the eastern half of the R2R endures much more horse traffic, so runnable trail continued to be interrupted by areas that were eroded, flooded, or overall mucked up. This section had some beautiful single track, great views, and was a joy to run. The wind was still gusting. I approached a gorgeous blufftop, and stepped up to the edge, and let the wind whip around me. It cooled me, and my ponytail whirled around, tickling my face. What a gorgeous day. I was happy to be here!

When I was growing up, there was a big dogwood tree in the corner of my backyard. I watched it bloom every spring. I looked forward to it, knowing it was telling me spring was here. I loved that backyard, playing outside, enjoying my childhood. Even now, every spring, I'm playing outside somewhere, watching dogwoods bloom. There were so many dogwoods in full bloom along this section – they were beautiful against the towering rock formations. I highly recommend the section from Garden of the Gods to Herod!

There were a few sections of trail already overgrown with thorns and various foliage approaching Herod. I thought about ticks, those tiny demons. I used to get so many ticks trail running! I complained about this to my uncle-in-law Steve Combs (who is an amazing ultrarunner in Virginia), and his wise words were "Just run faster". I ran as fast as I could through the overgrown section, as I always do these days. No ticks! No ticks the entire 157 miles. Great advice – Thanks, Steve!

I met my crew vehicle as the trail came out on the road. There was a decent road section next, so I changed into my road shoes. I took the steep downhill into Herod super easy. I did not want to wreck my quads. I was moving well. I loaded up on Dan's Bars and water and set

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off on the next trail section. When I had recently run it with Brittany, the area had JUST been burned, such that some tree trunks were still smoldering. It was interesting to run again two weeks later and see how quickly the forest growth was returning. There was a surprising amount of greenery! I was in awe of nature. There was some nice bluff running (although some muck in parts) and amazing rock formations approaching and leaving One Horse Gap. Coach Mike met me at One Horse Gap to yell encouragement from the top of rock formations in what would be only one of his two runs on the journey (lol). I was moving more slowly than predicted; he told me not to freak out, to relax, it would be fine.

I ran on some nice, runnable trail, then had some gravel running to the next trailhead. Now is a good time to list the contents of my pack. For almost the entirety of the FKT, I wore an Ultraspire Basham vest, which is lightweight, has a small footprint, and never hurts my back no matter how long I wear it. It is made with the female frame in mind. As I entered this trail section, the vest held two Dan's Bars, a big canister of dog spray, headlamp, chapstick, inhaler, plastic bag of toilet paper, hand sanitizer, phone, 500mL of Tailwind, and a second 500mL flask of water. It is, no contest, my favorite lightweight vest.

I was at 40 miles at 5:30p, and really wanted to get through Lusk Creek Wilderness before dark. This section has a lot of splits and is difficult to follow in some areas. I enjoyed some awesome miles in Lusk Creek. I was loving all of this vitamin tree. I was able to get into a nice groove several times. Near the next crew aid, I took a pointy rock to the base of my right midfoot, and it was going to bruise nicely. I changed to my cushy Hoka Speedgoats to protect my feet more for the remainder of the trail sections. Right after changing my shoes, I waded through Little Lusk Creek (poor timing). The water went up over most of my thighs – what a surprise it was! The cool water felt great on my tired legs. I saw a face in the distance – another hallucination? It was another fun tree, with a big'ol nose and a hairy face! Nature art is the best art.

Running on the bluff over Lusk Creek was amazing. The sun was setting, and the views were inspiring! I made it to big Lusk Creek at 7:27 with a little bit of daylight left. The sun set quickly, and I was lucky to have Coach Mike run with me for the last four miles of the Wilderness. I knew the coyotes I was hearing were far away, but they still made the hair on the back of my neck stand up. Mike knows the Shawnee better than almost anyone. He has been mountain-biking, horseback riding, or running it since its creation, and there was no better person than the Shawnee G.O.A.T. to coach me through this.

The trail section leading into Eddyville was lovely and runnable, and even though I ran it at night, no whammies! I was happy to be here. I ran/walked the few miles of road into Eddyville, thankful to be done with Day One (54 miles). I paused my watch and would restart it in this exact spot tomorrow morning. I felt good, like I'd run 30 miles instead of a little over 50. I wasn't feeling pain anywhere. I had run in four different shoes! While running, I'd eaten ten Dan's Protein Bars (!!!!!!!!!!!), two bananas, one Honey Stinger waffle, one pack of caffeinated jellybeans, three pieces of turkey bacon, and a gluten-free, crustless, peanut

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butter, honey sandwich. When I finished, I ate some calories (French fries from Shotgun Eddys and a gluten-free turkey sandwich). I stayed at an Airbnb in Harrisburg. I showered, iced down my legs, propped them up, and ate as many more calories (this time healthy stir-fry) as I could cram in before I fell asleep for six hours.

I slept reasonably well. My legs were tight when I woke up, but not painful. They were a little beat up – thorn scratches and bruises from day one, but not bad. I felt rested and ready to go. I started running out of Eddyville on road. My legs were TIGHT. They were not warmed up by the time I hit the trail in the Double Branch Area. There was nice single-track trail running with sporadic momentum-crushing mudholes. It's just part of running in the Shawnee, but accepting it doesn't make it any easier to run through! There were some lovely creek crossings, including Hayes Creek. The cold water felt great coursing across my tight legs and feet. Climbing the rocky uphill seemed harder this morning than yesterday. I ate my first Dan's Bar of the day. Not tired of them yet! I admired awesome rock formations in this area.

I crossed over Cedar Grove Road. The next few miles would bring back memories of the Shawnee Hills 100, as the race runs on some of the R2R trail. I knew this section well, running it several times in preparation for and during the race. I'm 90% sure I'm running the SH100 again this year, with the goal of being the first female to run under 24hours...and also not breaking my pelvis this time. I enjoyed this section. I saw some forest cactuses and met several equestrians around Millstone Lake. It was a beautiful day for a run or ride! They were lovely people and let me pass with plenty of room. I climbed some tough hills, including the one up to and past Tin Whistle (a metal tunnel that passes under train tracks). What a rocky climb! It gets me Every. Single. Time. The trail got mucky again approaching the Trigg Tower Road Crossing. My ankles were turning so much with these trail conditions. I started having some pain on the front part of my left ankle. It felt like my shoes were too tight, but I didn't think they were. They were necessarily tight considering the turning, slipping, and sliding. I inspected the area of pain and discovered the tongue of my shoe had migrated over to the side and wasn't protecting the soft tissue over my ankle from my laces. Shoot. It was already starting to swell. I met Coach Mike at the Gum Springs Road. I didn't want to change my shoes yet, I was only at 70 miles total (about 16 for the day), and I had planned on these shoes taking the highest mileage. He strongly encouraged a shoe change – address any problem immediately, don't wait for it to get worse. I changed my shoes. The hill after was full of many types of wildflowers. I stopped and stood in the trail, doing a 360 to take them all in. The colorful decoration almost made me forget I was climbing up a rocky incline! I admired beautiful Cedar Creek and climbed up to a farm with upside-down boots displayed on top of the fence posts, the "Boot Ranch". Mile 73. I ran a few miles of gravel/paved road, passed a house of which I am hesitant about the dogs (they're good dogs, I just get nervous), and paused at the Max Creek Trailhead to put KT tape and pain cream on my lace bite. It was swelling and hurting more with each mile. I was glad I had changed shoes; any more direct lace trauma may have been too much to problem solve.

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A stick lightly punctured my right shin running toward Max Creek – ouch! Just keep moving. Max Creek was gorgeous! It was a lovely shade of blue decorated with huge gray boulders highlighted by splashes of white lichen. I made it to Taylor Ridge road and changed into my road shoes (3rd shoe change of the day!) for the upcoming miles of gravel and road. Almost to the halfway point! Running on US45 was not my favorite. There were lots of off lead dogs in yards, so I crisscrossed the road to keep as much distance as possible between us. I think most had invisible fences, but how am I supposed to know that? There needs to be a sign, which in the words of Molly Falconer should read – “Don’t poop your pants. There IS a fence.” It would be so helpful! There was traffic, and a lady trying to deliver mail around me, and I was ecstatic to get to the halfway point at Goddard Crossing – mile 79.5! I felt great except for being a bit hot and my painful front left ankle, which was becoming a painful left shin as well. Leaving the road, I headed down what looked like a personal driveway, but it was indeed the trail! I entered the forest again, running on some interesting flat rocks. There were few areas on the trail like this, so I enjoyed the different surface. Quickly, I realized I was still wearing my road shoes (whoops). Sometimes it’s hard to remember every detail in planning. I took the Hoka Bondis on some technical trail miles and they did just fine! Luckily, this section wasn’t too muddy and was quite runnable. There was a neat powerline run too – the grass was so green! I passed over the Tunnel Hill bike trail, enjoyed admiring Little Cache Creek, and continued over some trail destroyed by ATVs to meet Brittany and Mike. I was ecstatic to see them! I complained about my ankle some, refueled, and headed out, rejuvenated with Brittany pacing me! We moved pretty well! Dutchman’s Lake was so scenic! Brittany reminisced about swimming across it during an adventure race in February in 24 degree weather (she’s kind of a bada\*\*). We left the trail to run five road miles (a mix of gravel and pavement). There were some good hills on this section! The traffic was not very pleasant on US37. We were happy to reach Ferne Clyffe. We run at Ferne Clyffe so much, this felt like home. I changed into trail shoes and off we went! The bottom land in Ferne was surrounded by fields of wildflowers as far as you could see. It was gorgeous. Even in the fading light, the blueish purple color of the flowers was incredible! The vertical gain in Ferne Clyffe wore me out. As we exited Ferne, it was completely dark, and I was at about 100 miles total. I wanted to make it to the Panther’s Den trailhead today, but I didn’t know if I had nine more miles in me. We ran through Goreville and into the next trail section for Bork’s Falls. It was a quick trail section, a little over two miles. I was dead. I was thankful I didn’t fall trail running in the dark as tired as I was. At this point, it was 10:00pm and I was mostly walking. I rationalized that if I left some road running from this section until the morning, it would be a good warm-up for my legs first thing. That thought made me feel better about stopping at mile 106.2. My ankle was swollen, red, and hurt like crazy. As soon as I stopped running, I took some ibuprofen to help with the inflammation, rubbed some anti-inflammatory cream on it, and put some ice around it. I was about 35 minutes from my house, so I drove home for the night. Hubs followed me to make sure I made it safely. I was exhausted. I ate as much as I could, showered, iced down my legs, and slept for six hours. I did not know how I would feel when I woke up, but I was worried it wouldn’t be very good.

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Day Three started late so I could get a full six hours of sleep. I ended back on the route about 10:00am. My legs felt wrecked, but my ankle swelling had gone down some. I was glad I had left some road miles for warm-up before I hit the trail. My legs felt like groups of old, stretched rubber bands. It wasn't my favorite feeling, but my spirits were high! I had made it to the (hopefully) last day, and I was excited to run through some of my favorite parts, sections which see fewer equestrian traffic and aren't so obliterated. I made a wrong turn in the lowlands of Panther's Den but realized it pretty quickly. My brain wasn't firing at its best, so I was going to have to rely on Avenza a lot today (thanks R2R Trail Society for the maps!). Panther's Den is a nice hike, but a hard run. It felt too hard. I was happy to see a familiar, old, overturned truck that signaled I was leaving Panther's Den wilderness. The section of trail approaching Rocky Comfort was nice and runnable. I moved as quickly as possible, walking the uphill, running the flats, and doing whatever I could on the downhill. My ankle seemed to be bothered more by the downhill. I passed over Rocky Comfort and found a morel mushroom! Success! I wasn't really looking (I promise!), I just happened to look right at it. That's some trail magic right there!

Running through Giant City State Park was an enjoyable, hilly, familiar few miles. The front of my ankle was still hurting, like a dull throb from mid-shin level to the top of my foot, but I wasn't in the pain cave. However, I couldn't help but repeatedly evaluate its status. Was it getting worse? If it got worse, would I be able to finish? The answer continued to be it was getting worse, but not quickly. I had a gut feeling it wouldn't give out before I finished. I climbed out of Makanda, which is one of the cutest dang towns! The steepest part of the climb ascends along a gorgeous creek surrounded by lush greenery. Just lovely! Some road, trail, more road, and I see a person standing in the road, waving, and yelling encouragement. It was Katy Green, cheering as I passed her house! Our running club is literally the best.

I entered another trail section, and quickly I smelled smoke. Green changed to black as I ran into newly burned forest, so freshly burned tree trunks were still smoldering. Déjà vu! I was lucky to have missed the controlled burns. I wondered what I would have done if I'd approached burning forest at mile 130? Hmm...What do you think?

I approached Cedar Lake. I enjoyed some great miles through this area. Crossing the spillway rapids is always an adventure of piecing together a route of algae covered rocks through the flowing water. The water level was low, so it was a pretty easy crossing. Good thing! It was getting hard to control exactly where my foot was landing when it wasn't directly underneath me. It was a fun puzzle – no whammies!

I was nervous approaching the road to Alto Pass because off-lead dogs had started to run through the field toward me during my training run there. I was getting close, more nervous. I checked my Halt! dog spray and centered myself. Slow breath in, slow breath out. Be calm, dogs can sense the calmness, right? I heard noise coming toward me...holy

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sh\*\*balls...it was Brittany! YAY! I was ecstatic and relieved. Next up was a long road section, so I changed my shoes and dropped as much weight from my vest as possible in the crew vehicle. The first few miles were good, Brittany and I chatted off and on, then I hit a rough patch. Running wasn't comfortable anymore. Every step was an effort. My ankle hurt. Mile 138, about 19 miles to go. Relatively, I was close to the end! But I did not feel close. The sun was going down fast. I realized I wasn't going to finish the last trail section before nightfall. I was nervous about running on trail at night while being so completely drained. A bad fall could take me out in a second. Then, we came to a clearing at the top of a hill, and the view from us to the Bald Knob Cross in the distance was perfection. The sunset was decorating the sky, and I smiled from ear to ear. I exhaled. I was happy to be here. I smiled at the people around me, helping me do this thing.

At the start of the last trail section, a 6.4mile section I'd deemed easy in training, Brittany and I grabbed our headlamps. Coach Mike said some encouraging words, handed me my refilled fluids, Dan's Bars, and caffeinated jelly beans. I felt an influx of energy – this was the last trail section! 17.4 miles until the end! We started out, my legs were tight, and I struggled to focus on the trail. We came to a split, and we couldn't find a trail marker with our limited view from our head lamps. My gut said go left, and I didn't feel like getting my phone out of my pack to check Avenza. It seemed like such a hard thing to do in that moment. We went left for a bit; it didn't feel right. I checked Avenza, we were off-trail. The last thing I wanted was to add more miles at this point! It was pretty soul-crushing. We turned around and made our way back on track. There were more downed trees than I remembered, more roots and rocks. It was not easy, WHAMMY, fall #2 at 142 miles. It was a soft face-plant, so I got up and kept going before any pain could set in. I realized that I wasn't going to make my goal of 2 days and 15 hours, but I was okay with it. I was going set the new FKT, and I was proud of my effort. Heck, I'd only fallen twice in 142 miles. That's pretty darn good for me!

We came to a large creek crossing. Our lights were not bright enough to see across the creek. I couldn't remember where the trail picked up on the other side. I pulled out my phone, and we crossed blindly trying to match the course on Avenza. We found the trail and continued. Everything was hard. The entire front of my leg from shin to foot was swollen and red. It was pulsating; it was distracting. We were running on a bluff top, and WHAMMY – fall #3 at 145 miles. I wasn't clearing some of the roots anymore. I focused on pulling my legs higher, lift, lift, lift. There was a lot of walking. There was a lot of patience on Brittany's part. The forest serenaded us with its night sounds – owls, coyotes, frogs, and a lone Whippoorwill. I could see car lights in the distance through the forest. We were close to the end of the single-track! Close is relative, the last mile was hard. I decorated my pain cave: purple sofa, black and white rug, a warm fire going in the fireplace, and one of those cool clocks in which you can see the inner workings. I sat down on the sofa, accepting the pain, leaning into the discomfort. I was going to finish tonight. I had come too far. I was happy to be here, grateful to attempt this.



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The crew vehicle came into view. There was one more road section until the Mississippi. Mike met us with questions about how things were going and encouraging words. I mumbled something, and then three of the Badass Lady Gang jumped out from behind the vehicle, ready to run the last 11 miles with me. I was surprised, grateful, and overwhelmed with their sacrifice. They had come a long way, in the middle of the night, to run on gravel with me – the worst gravel ever, the big, chunky, torturous kind. Penny hates nature, and we were running right next to Snake Road (a road in southern Illinois closed every spring because the annual snake migration is so huge). One of the Lady Gang needed to use the restroom, and she darted off trail and behind a boulder (BY SNAKE ROAD) before I could alert her to our proximity to this snake haven. I managed to yell, “Watch out for snakes!”. Going off trail in the dark by Snake Road was probably gutsier than the FKT attempt itself! I ate my 22nd Dan’s Bar. We saw the lights of train tracks ahead and heard a train. Oh, heck no. We did not want to wait for a train. We picked up the pace and pushed to beat it. That’s right – racing a train at mile 150! Success!

Y’all, I usually don’t mind gravel, but this gravel was terrible, and it was never-ending. I felt bad that I had asked people to come run this with me, but I was glad they were there. Had they not been, I might have wound up curled up in the fetal position in that dang gravel. Sabrina was getting eaten alive by bugs, Penny was in nature at night (!), Brittany had been putting up with me for almost 50 miles total, and Becky was Becky – smiling pleasantly, looking as if this was all a cake walk. Coach Mike drove behind us, illuminating the five of us with headlights. We must have been a scene up on that levee at midnight! I was having a hard time controlling my legs, I started to weave a little. My ankle was throbbing. But the stars were as lovely as the company, and I started to make out the lights of Grand Tower in the distance. I was going to do this. I was happy, and I wanted to move faster, but I couldn’t. We jogged some, walked some, and repeated for the last few, painful, rewarding miles. We hit the blacktop in Grand Tower, interrupted by two large sinkholes in the road. We were so close. We ran around a bend, I was excited, I gave everything I had left. We could see the sign for the end of the trail! I could see the sand that approached the Mississippi! I saw Hubs, that wonderful man who supports me doing things like this! I ran up to the sign, touched it, leaned on it, and thanked it for such an extraordinary journey. I gingerly walked on the sand toward the Mississippi, seeking a place in which to dip my toe. Hubs followed me as I weaved my way down, making sure I was okay. With the river toe tap, I was finished, 12:41am: 157.44 miles in 2 days, 17 hours, 35 minutes, 11 seconds. Time since start: 65:35:11. Time spent actively moving forward: 43:14:30. I exhaled for a long time. I looked back up the shore to the group, grateful to have such incredible friends. Their smiles were glowing in the lights of their headlamps. Brittany made the most delicious, cutest dang celebratory FKT cookies. There was consumption of delicious beverages and accompanying toasts. I was overjoyed, exhausted, and overwhelmingly thankful. I was so happy to be there! I covered the entire R2R trail, that beast, in less than three days. Now, who is going to run it faster so I can do it again?