

Winthrop Valley Life: Barefoot Badass Wolverine Beer Run

[Appeared in Methow Valley News 1.16.19](#)

(photos are from 2025)

A person can live here for many years and not be considered a local, but still there are occasional milestones that make a person feel like she/he belongs in a place. One such moment for me was when Hank (of Hank's Harvest Foods, of course) started calling me by name. And another came just recently when I was given the chance to be a badass wolverine.



The invitation came from John and Kelly Rohrer, who have been hosting the Barefoot Barebelly Badass Wolverine Beer Run since 2010. The event, which is always held some time in the early winter, involves stripping down to as few layers as each runner is willing without being completely indecent, cracking open a beer, and running barefoot in the snow around a 250-meter loop in the Rohrer's back yard to release one's inner wolverine. Once you've finished both the run and the beer, you're a badass wolverine.

The run's inspiration came from the Rohrers' son, Remington, who was lying around on the couch one evening ten years ago. Remington wanted to read the

newspaper, but no one had collected the mail yet. "Go grab it out of the mailbox," John told his son. "But I already have my shoes and socks off," Remington protested, parroting a well-known pathetic excuse to try to get oneself out of pretty much any onerous task. John was unrelenting.

Some moments later Remington said, "You know, I bet I could run out to the mailbox, grab the paper, and be back in under 30 seconds." John looked at his watch and said, "Go." Like a young wolverine, Remington scampered. And the Barefoot Barebelly Badass Wolverine Beer Run was born.

About a dozen people showed up for this year's run, which was held on January 6, on a glorious sunny afternoon with mild temperatures and reasonably soft snow. (The reason I mention the snow consistency is that some years runners punch through the crust and get bloody feet. Most of us escaped that fate this year.)

I can tell you with authority that running 250 meters in snow with bare feet is even more painful than it sounds. It's also a lot of effort, since your feet sink in and slide a little backwards with every step. For about the first 25 meters I was laughing and concentrating on not spilling my beer, and thereafter I was practicing meditative breathing techniques and chanting silent self-affirmations, unsure if I would be able to make it through the entire loop. At the halfway point I had no option but to press on, which I did with a laser-like focus on the finish line area, eventually reaching the end after what seemed like about a half hour but in actuality was probably more like two minutes.





Once I realized that I had survived the run and would probably not have to get both feet amputated, I felt very self-congratulatory. Until I heard that a second wave of runners showed up to do the run that evening, in the dark, with air five degrees colder, and a bit of a crust. And gracious host that he is, John Rohrer ran with them, his second time that day, securing his title as the baddest of all badass wolverines.

Feet unnaturally red and burning, I sipped the frothy PBR that I had been unable to drink during the actual run, looked around at the other badass wolverines, and was reminded once again that in a valley this small and diverse, it's a rich thing to run with many different packs.

