



For Immediate Release

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Media Contact Information:
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Keith Peters, Media Coordinator
307-690-6803 or kpeters@cherryblossom.org

Website: www.cherryblossom.org

Contact Keith Peters for race-day media credentials. Space on media trucks (one for the men's race and one for the women's race) is extremely limited, so call ahead to ensure seating. TV crews should also call in advance to secure parking for trucks on race morning.

Please note: There will be very limited space on the finish line for photographers. Please be respectful of race officials and volunteers as they try to keep the area clear and safe for all involved.

A comprehensive media guide is available for download at www.CherryBlossom.org.

Multiple Championships Add Intrigue to 2018 Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile

Open, American, PRRO and RRCA Prize Money and Bonuses Offered Exceed \$100,000

April 3, 2018, Washington, DC: As they have for the past several years, organizers of the 46th Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run will offer over \$90,000 in prize money and bonuses to top runners, including a \$10,000 American record bonus for the first American man to break **Greg Meyer's** American record of 46:13, set here in 1983, and for the first American woman to break **Janet Bawcom's** single-sex American record of 52:12, set here in 2014. In addition, this year's Runner's Rite of Spring® will serve as the Professional Road Racing Organization's (PRRO) 2018 Championship - with an additional \$10,000 PRRO Super Bonus available to the winners of the five PRRO Circuit races, should one of them win the 2018 Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile.

The Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile will also serve as the 2018 Road Runners Club of America National Championship for ten miles, and will award \$1,200 each to the first male and female finishers among RRCA Roads Scholars and Run Pro Camp alumni.

Event Director Phil Stewart said, "This is one of our deepest elite fields ever both in terms of quality and quantity. I am expecting some exciting competition under cherry blossoms at their peak."

As defending champion, Ethiopian **Hiwott Gebrekidan** comes in as the favorite in the women's race, which will start at 7:18 a.m. on Sunday, April 8, 12 minutes prior to the start of the men's race. The separate start for women was implemented in 2006 to allow for the women's times to be considered as women's-only records without any effect of being paced by males.

Gebrekidan will be joined by fellow Ethiopian **Buze Diriba**, who finished second here the past two years (Diriba ran 53:52 to Gebrikidan's 53:37 last year). Diriba comes into the race off an impressive win at the recent United Airlines NYC Half Marathon.

As winners of 2017-18 PRRO Circuit races feeding into the 2018 PRRO Championship (Diriba won both

the 2017 Lilac Bloomsday Run in Spokane, WA, and the 2017 EQT Pittsburgh 10 Miler), Gebrekidan and Diriba will be racing for the \$10,000 PRRO Super Bonus as well as Cherry Blossom's open prize money and bonuses.

Among the American women, **Alaphine Tiliamuk**, third here in both 2015 and 2014, with a best time of 52:16 in 2014, will be joined by three compatriots with experience running the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile: **Lindsay Flanagan**, 10th in 2015 in 54:36; **Katie Kellner**, 11th last year in 57:27; and hometown favorite **Susanna Sullivan**, a school teacher from Reston, VA, who was 10th last year, 11th in 2015, eighth in 2014, and 24th in 2013, her first year out of college. Sullivan's best time on the Cherry Blossom course is 54:31 from 2014. On paper, Tiliamuk would seem to have the best chance to challenge Janet Bawcom's single-sex American record of 52:12, after trailing Bawcom by just four seconds in her record run in 2014.

In addition to chasing open and American prize money and bonuses, Susanna Sullivan, a RunPro Camper in 2014, will be racing against **Emma Bates** (2017 RRCA Roads Scholar), and **Katy Moen** (2015 RRCA Roads Scholar and RunPro Camper) for the \$1,200 prize and top honors among RRCA eligible runners. Bates recently ran a personal best for the half marathon of 1:11:45, placing 27th overall and first American at the World Half Marathon Championships in Valencia, Spain. Moen has run 56:29 for 10 miles.

In the men's race, Kenyan **Jamal Yimer** will wear bib number one, thanks to his recent 59:00 personal best and second-place finish at the RAK Half Marathon in Dubai, along with his fourth-place finish at the 2018 World Half Marathon Championships, held in Valencia, Spain, on March 24th. Yimer will be joined at the start line by fellow Kenyans **James Kibet**, second here last year in 46:39; **Silas Kipruto**, second here in 2016 in 48:27; **Daniel Salel**, winner here in 2013, second in 2014 and fourth in 2015, with a Cherry Blossom personal best of 45:29 run in 2014; and **Philemon Cheboi**, fifth here in both 2016 and 2017, with a best time of 46:43 run last year.

Panuel Mkungo, winner of the 2017 EQT Pittsburgh 10 Miler in 47:03, and Kipruto, winner of the 2017 Utica Boilermaker 15K in 43:55, are the only two men eligible to win the \$10,000 PRRO Super Bonus.

2016 Roads Scholar **Martin Hehir** may be the most likely American man to challenge race leaders, after finishing third here in 2016 in 48:29, and coming off an impressive third place finish at the recent Gate River Run 15K. Other top Americans include the following Roads Scholars and/or RunPro Camp alumni: **Tyler McCandless**, who has run Cherry Blossom three times and set a personal best of 48:21 here in 2014 (2011 Roads Scholar); **Matthew McClintock**, who has run a 1:02:34 half marathon (2017 Roads Scholar); **Johnny Crain**, with a personal best of 48:48 for 10 miles (2017 Roads Scholar and 2015 RunPro Camper); **Abbabiya Simbassa**, whose personal best for 10 miles is 48:33 (2016 RunPro Camper); and **Tyler Jermann**, who has run 49:22 for 10 miles (2017 Roads Scholar).

The competition among the men for American prize money and bonuses should be spirited, as should the race for the \$1,200 prize and top honors among RRCA eligible runners.

As is often the case with the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile, a number of other notable runners

have entered the race this year. **Matt Centrowitz**, 2016 Olympic Gold Medalist in the 1,500 Meters, will be running over ten times as far in his Cherry Blossom debut. His plans are to enjoy running a hard training run with over 16,000 of his closest friends. As he did in 2016, 2004 Olympic Marathon Silver Medalist **Mebratom "Meb" Keflezighi** will pace runners yearning to break the coveted 60-minute barrier for 10 miles. And **Joan Benoit Samuelson**, winner of the inaugural Women's Olympic Marathon in 1984 in Los Angeles, returns to run the 10-mile race for the fourth year in a row. As she moves into the 60-64 age group this year, Samuelson will be taking aim at the time of 1:08:17, which is the single-age record for 60-year-old women. **Don Kardong**, fourth in the Olympic Marathon in Montreal in 1976 will also be running - his first time here since 1996.

The only man to have run every Cherry Blossom Ten Mile, **Ben Beach** of Bethesda, MD, will toe the line again this year, just as he will line up to start his 52nd consecutive Boston Marathon eight days later. One other prolific local runner, **Mike Wardian** of Arlington, VA, is entered, though he'll be running the race for only the tenth time. Among his many accomplishments, Wardian set a world record for the fastest time for seven marathons run on seven different continents in seven consecutive days in January 2017 (average pace of 2:45:56).

The Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run and 5K Run-Walk attracts some 16,000 participants on a course which starts and finishes on the Washington Memorial Grounds and passes by all of Washington DC's major monuments and memorials. The 46th running of the event is scheduled for Sunday, April 8, 2018, with the mass start of the 10-mile starting at 7:30 a.m. and the 5K Run-Walk starting at 9:00 a.m. The Credit Union Cherry Blossom Kids' Run will start at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 7, at the National Building Museum.

Over 27,000 runners submitted applications to participate in the 2018 Credit Union Cherry Blossom 10 Mile and 5K Run-Walk, and the list of accepted runners represents all 50 states and 14 foreign countries. The event is limited to 16,000 finishers by the National Park Service.

The 2018 event will mark the 17th year of title sponsorship by Credit Union Miracle Day. Since 2002, over \$8 million has been raised for the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals.

About the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile

The Credit Union Cherry Blossom, organized by Cherry Blossom, Inc., a 501c(3) chapter of the Road Runners Club of America, is known as "The Runner's Rite of Spring®" in the Nation's Capital. The staging area for the event is on the Washington Monument Grounds, and the course passes in sight of all of the major Washington, DC Memorials. The event serves as a fundraiser for the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, a consortium of 170 premier children's hospitals across North America. About one-third of the funds raised support Washington, DC's own Children's National ("Children's Hospital"). The event also funds two \$5,000 Road Runners Club of America "Roads Scholar" grants designed to support up-and-coming U.S. distance running talent.

The event is a proud member of the **PRRO Circuit** (PRRO.org), a series of non-marathon prize money road races in Tampa, FL; Washington, DC; Spokane, WA; Utica, NY; and Pittsburgh, PA, with the 2018

PRRO Championships to be hosted by the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile on April 8. The circuit is committed to a drug-free sport and funds Clearidium to conduct drug testing at all circuit events in compliance with the standards of international and U.S. drug testing authorities.

In addition to being sanctioned by **USA Track & Field** and the **Road Runners Club of America**, the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run has earned Gold Level Inspire Certification from the **Council for Responsible Sport** in recognition of its legacy of commitment to sustainability and thoughtful resource management. To learn more, visit www.CherryBlossom.org.

Credit Union Miracle Day, Inc., a consortium of credit unions and credit union suppliers in partnership with CUNA Mutual Group and PSCU, is the title sponsor of the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run, 5K Run-Walk and Kids' Run. Hood Cottage Cheese is the presenting sponsor of the 5K Run-Walk. Supporting sponsors include Barody Camps, E-Trade, Garmin, Gatorade, GEICO, Gold's Gym, Mamma Lucia, MedStar Sports Medicine, Navy Federal Credit Union, Old Ox Brewery, Potomac River Running, Suburban Solutions, and Under Armour.

About America's Credit Unions:

Credit unions provide consumers choices for financial services such as checking accounts, investments and loans of all kinds including mortgages. Funds are federally insured, but unlike banks, there are no stockholders at credit unions. Earnings are returned to member-owners in the form of lower loan rates, higher savings rates, low or no-fee products and services. The credit union philosophy of placing members' needs first is why more than 113 million Americans do their banking at one of America's 5,800 credit unions. Credit unions are for everyone - no matter where you live, there is a credit union to meet your needs.

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