

# Runners and Walkers Flock to the First Annual Wild Goose Chase Run and Walk

*October 4, 2008*

There were 224 running shoes pounding the trails at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) on Saturday, October 4, 2008, for a very unique event. The first ever **Wild Goose Chase 5 K Run and Walk** drew 112 participants, between the ages of 6 and 74, from all over the mid-Michigan area. Competitive runners and walkers and those that just came out for a leisurely stroll made up the pack.



*Ready, set, go! One hundred and twelve runners and walkers leave the start line at the first Wild Goose Chase 5 K Run/Walk at Shiawassee NWR.  
Joy Clark/Refuge Volunteer; October 4, 2008*

Runners and walkers followed a route along gravel roads and hiking trails, some of it in normally closed areas that featured Canada geese flying overhead and deer all around. The overall winning runner with a time of 18:10.86 probably would have finished even faster if he didn't have to slow down a bit for an unsuspecting herd of deer grazing on the trail!

For many race participants, this was their first time on the refuge. Most said they were intrigued by the notion of having a running and walking race in the “wilderness.” Visitor Services Manager and **Wild Goose Chase** Race Director Becky Goche said, “We heard numerous positive comments – great course, well organized event, cool t-shirt logo, nice prizes, and a good selection of finish line refreshments. We anticipate that next year’s race will have even more participants as the word spreads among the running and walking circles.”



*Puddles did not compete in this year's Wild Goose Chase 5K Run/Walk, but helped hand out awards to the top finishers. Brenda Sievert of Frankenmuth, MI was the first female to cross the finish line with a time of 23:44.83.*

*Joy Clark/Refuge Volunteer; October 4, 2008.*

Planning for this race officially began in February, 2008. Before that, the idea of having a race on the refuge was tossed around for years as a way for the Friends of Shiawassee NWR to raise money. The run planning committee made up of Becky Goche, Steve Kahl, Ed DeVries, and Tom Horb from the refuge and Susan Scott from the Friends was the driving force behind the **Wild Goose Chase**. With the help of a seasoned race director who coordinates one of the biggest races in mid-Michigan, talking with Squaw Creek NWR about their run, and working with a professional race timing company, everything was ready for a well planned race. Five partners, including the Friends group, came forward to help the refuge sponsor the **Wild Goose Chase**. On the day of the race, eight volunteers donated 43 hours working the registration table, taking pictures,

helping at the finish line, and providing water and other refreshments to the runners and walkers. Six refuge staff also worked the event.