

# My “Watershed” Moment

and Apennine Mountains. There were trails and trail races galore!

When I found out that we were returning to North Carolina, I immediately started to search for trails in Greensboro, so that when we arrived home, I could continue my training and indulge in my hobby. I wasn't optimistic as I began my search because I couldn't recall one time that I had heard anyone mention trails the

entire time we lived there. Boy, was

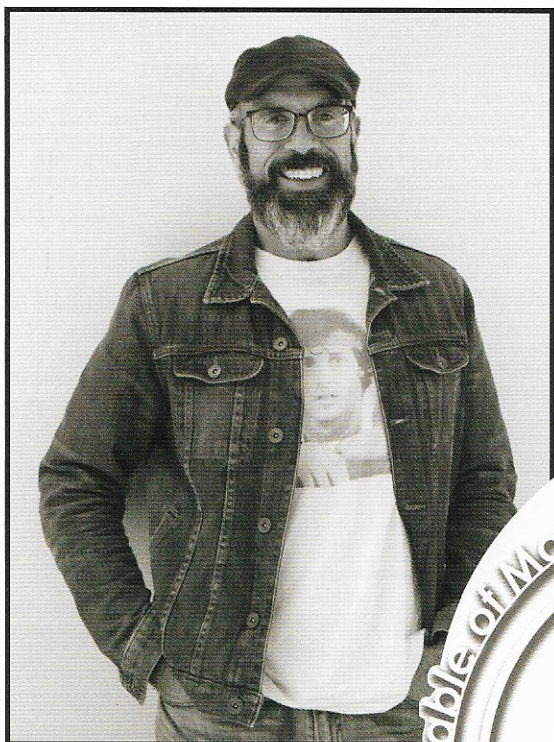
I pleasantly surprised! The first thing that popped up on Google was the Triple Lakes Trail Race. As I started to plow through the race website, I was absolutely amazed to see that there was this huge trail system literally in my backyard! How could I have missed this? Obviously, like any good (crazy) runner, I signed up for the race right away, and chose the 40-mile option, and as soon as we moved back in to our home, I started to explore.

The first place that I went was the website for the City of Greensboro Department of Parks and Recreation. It is a treasure trove of information on the Greensboro Watershed Trail system. Here is the link so that you can check it out yourself: <http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/index.aspx?page=1359>

On this webpage, you will find two really handy tools. The first one is a Trail Guide, that you can download and it will provide you with information on the almost 50 miles of trails that we have right here in our beloved Greensboro/Triad area! There is a great map of the trail system with a legend that indicates which trails are for pedestrians and which are shared between pedestrians and bikers, as well as the many access points to the trail system. The second is a mapping program/app that you can download to your phone and it will provide directions to all of the parking locations for the various trails! These two tools give you all of the information that you need to get started in discovering this hidden gem.

Once I had this information handy, I got down to the fun stuff! I put on my running shoes and hit the trails.

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**M**y family and I first moved to Greensboro, NC in the summer of 2007. I can assure you that I was a very different person back then. All of my children were still in school, spanning grades two through twelve. Our days were filled with work, soccer practice, ballet, and being unpaid chauffeurs for our rather large family. We were happy being Mom and Dad, and like most young parents, we lived for our children. And while I wouldn't change a thing in the world, looking back at the time now, I realize that it was very easy to hustle through the day and miss some of the amazing things that are right in front of you.

In 2010, we had the opportunity of a life time, to move abroad, and left Greensboro. But we kept our house, because Greensboro had become “home” in the short time that we lived here. Fast forward to 2017 and my wife and I were fortunate enough to return to the area after our assignment abroad. However, we are at a very different period in our life. For all intents and purposes, we are now empty nesters, and as the kids grew and became much more independent, I had time to focus more on myself. While we were living in Florence, Italy, I developed a love for trail running. Living in such an old and beautiful city was such an incredible opportunity and it is nestled between the Tuscan hills





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Fortunately, I live a ¼ of a mile from an access point to the Bill Craft Trail which is part of the Richardson-Taylor Preserve. Using the map that is in the guide, I was able to navigate the trails easily and over a series of weekends, I explored the majority of the trails and enjoyed the scenery with Lake Higgins, Lake Brandt, and Lake Townsend providing breathtaking backdrops.

For us trail runners, the terrain can run the gambit from very technical to fairly flat and straight forward. There are plenty of rocks, roots, and obstacles from fallen trees or natural debris that the weather and wind can cause, so stay sharp! My experience has been that while you can run the same trail over and over, no two runs will be the same. In my opinion, this is what makes trail running so much fun though, you can never get too comfortable as nature keeps things interesting via constant changes in conditions. The same trail wet is not the same trail dry.

While there are not many serious hills, the Watershed Trails are sneaky tough. When people ask me about the elevation change, or lack thereof, I tell them that our trails are like running ski moguls. Owl's Roost or Blue Heron have some moguls that can be so severe you will put your hand on the ground as you climb out of the bunker! This type of repetitive up and down over the course of miles will challenge even the best of trail runner and have your quads screaming for mercy.

Finally, in the world of, "If it didn't happen on Strava, it didn't happen", there are photo opportunities aplenty. Between the water fowl, deer, hard woods, pines, foliage, and lakes, it can be difficult to focus on your run! Many a long run has been interrupted to snap a photo of the wildlife or a simple gratuitous selfie with the trails providing the backdrop. Every day that I get out there, I realize how blessed I am to have these stunning trails so close by.

Before I close this article, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the plethora of non-running activities that are available at the marinas that the trails run through. The marinas at Lake Higgins, Lake Brandt, and Lake Townsend all offer, fishing, boating, kayaking, canoeing, and stand up paddle boarding. All right here in Greensboro. These are great activities that you can take the whole family along for, and who knows? Maybe one or more of them will be inclined to go for a little run with you.

*Joe Randene is a trail runner and blogger. You can read his blog at [www.joerandene.com](http://www.joerandene.com) or contact him via e-mail at [joe.randene@joerandene.com](mailto:joe.randene@joerandene.com)*

**WINTER 2017**

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