81 km Double-Marathon Mud Run for the Mary River September 2008

Some people write letters, some people attend rallies, but for Lindsay Titmarsh of Tandora, a history making 81km mega marathon run was his way of saying “No” to the proposed dam on the Mary River on Sunday, 7 September, 2008.

“I live with my family at Tandora, the only property situated beside the estuary of the Mary River. Having lived here for just over 100 years, we have seen the watercourse change dramatically in that time,” explains Mr Titmarsh.

“For all of my life I have looked at the two hilly headlands, North Head and South Head, which are only one kilometre apart and form the mouth of the Mary River. Nobody has ever traveled on foot from one headland to the other.

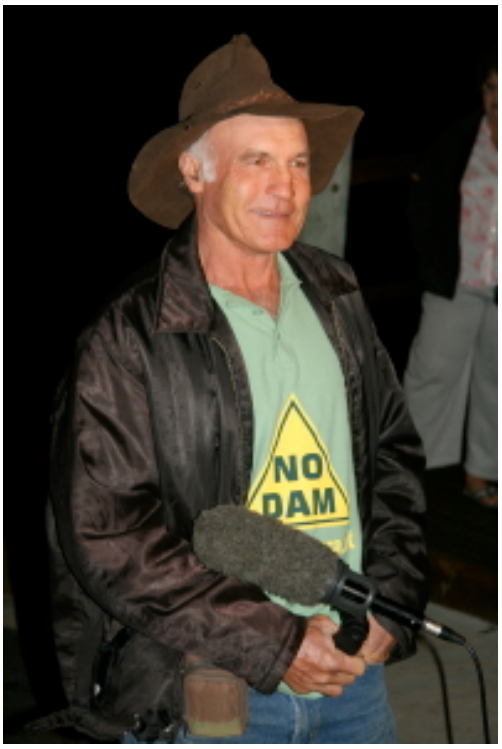
“I’ve wanted to be the first to do this run for years. The threat of a dam on the Mary River has given me the extra motivation to go ahead with my plans this year, a couple of weeks after my 60th birthday. I hope it will draw attention to the importance of the Mary River for the estuary and for the communities that live along it’s length.”

I hope my run will help us prevent the damming of the Mary.”

Lindsay Titmarsh and Joan Darlington near Beaver Rock. Joan ran with Linday for 60km and was with him to the finish.

The general public and businesses are invited to sponsor Mr Titmarsh’s effort. All proceeds will be directed by the Greater Mary Association Inc toward the fight to save the Mary from the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam.
For sponsorship enquiries, please contact Tanzi on greatermary@gmail.com or 0405848375

Report on event from independent observer Erica Neate



At the beginning…

4.30 am Arrive at River Heads (north) boat ramp. Pitch dark. Clear skies.
5.00 am Cindy Singho and family perform pre-dawn Blessing and Aboriginal Farewell Dance.

Lindsay & I travel by boat to oyster banks on River Heads (south) in the pre-dawn half-light.

TV cameraman jokes that he will get two stories: (1) the Marathon Mudrun & (2) the boat hitting the rocks & sinking in the dark!

5.21 AM Lindsay's feet touch the water at River Heads (south), as he disembarks into 1 metre deep water.

After wading ashore and crossing the slippery tidal rocky shoreline, Lindsay disappeared from our view into the mangroves.

He looks sure on his feet on the rough terrain and very focused. A good start.

Mudrunning in earnest: knee-deep mangrove mud and boggy salt marshes. Keeping good time.

After daylight, aerial surveillance checked his progress. We watched the plane circling.

He is moving so fast they have trouble finding him at first. His wife is relieved to know he is okay.

8 am **Near Turkey Creek**. He takes off his high-visibility safety vest. No need for a search & rescue team now.

Mud covered legs but in good spirits. No injuries. Washes the salt & mud off. Puts on clean shoes.

Trying to tighten the laces, his hands are shaking a bit from the exertion of the mud run.

Bushtrack running. A startled bull gets out of his way.

Two days rain has made sections boggy. Another pair of clean shoes needed.

More family and friends have gathered to meet him as we come through the locked gate.

9 am **Near Beaver Rock.** Gravel road. He remains determined. Averaged 4.8km per hour including mud, change of shoes, clean up and smoko. He should drink more fluids.

Joined by an experienced marathon runner Joan Darlington who will help him pace himself.

10.30 am **Averaging 7.8 km per hour** since hitting the gravel road**.**

11.12 am **Joined by support walkers/runners** (who couldn't keep up with him!)

11.25 am **Crossed Granville Bridge.** Notice his left hip is causing pain

Cars tooting horns and waving in support thru city

11.38 am **Pass Maryborough Post Office & Anzac Memorial**

Queens Park: Stop for Media interview & wellwishers

Brolga Theatre: Stop for another Media photo & wellwishers

This frequent stopping could become a problem for him ....

11.50 am Gravel in shoe in Lennox St. Nasty looking feet-toe nail lifting.

11.57 am **Turn into Salt Water Creek Road.** Highway traffic now a concern.

Joined by a second long distance runner. Safety in numbers.

Support walkers have to take turns to keep up !

Outside St Helens State School

12.21pm **St Helen's School ... exactly seven hours**

Symbolic moment.....Lindsay and his children attended school here.

12.49 pm Saltwater Creek Bridge. Even the support crews are feeling the midday heat.

People fishing on old bridge amazed by his effort & offer a donation.

1.16 pm Pass Prawle Road corner (his last chance to sneak off home to Tandora, but he doesn't)

1.40 pm 'A bit wobbly', wild eyed, heat stressed, strong pain in lower right calf muscle

Ordered to only walk for next half hour. He did.

2.02 pm He informs us: 'No stopping anymore otherwise my leg buggers up."

2.24 pm Susan River Bridge

Lindsay has recovered, but now his wife is stressing, worried for his safety

Averaging 6.8 km per hour as he passes Stockmans Way

Gravel in shoe half way up last really big hill ..he has to sit down to remove it ...oh oh

It seems to take forever. Gets up & walks very slowly ...then runs to top of hill ! Hooray !

TV camerman waiting at top of hill very impressed.

3.11 pm Black Swamp Creek

Averaging 5.4 km per hour

Number of cars tooting their horns in support is gaining momentum

Lindsay tells me he is secretly plotting how 'to sneak into a car' without me seeing.

His support runner is also plotting 'to drive off on a go-kart' they see in a nearby paddock

Their cheekiness is a good sign....he IS going to make it.

3.34 pm Turn off highway into Booral Road

A family friend is amazed: "The bugger still looks as fresh as ever!"

But truth is Lindsay is now operating on pure guts. Everything hurts.

He tells his wife: "At this stage it is just a case of moving one foot at a time. Not much else you can do."

Averaging 6.2 km per hour.

4.36 pm Pass Main Street intersection. Notice he staggers if he stands still, so he must keep moving.

Newspaper photographer trying to get a good photo...if only Lindsay would slow down!

Averaging 6.4 km per hour

4.56 pm The staggers are gone. He is now looking visibly tired, but doing fine.

5.15 pm Turn into Bingham Road. Pioneer farming families arrive to give

support.

Averaging 5.6 km per hour

Joined by 5 more support runners & supporters cars

Average increases to 6.6. km per hour

6.00 pm Turn into River Heads Road

It's now dark. All we can see is his scrawny legs running in the headlights.

Joined by 10 more runners & a convoy of supporters cars with flashing lights

Four little kids in PJs sing 'Happy Birthday To You' as he passes. Very touching moment. (Just for the record his birthday was last month. The media got it wrong.)

6.46 pm Averaging 6.4 km per hour despite the hills

Given the GetUp! Australia Sustainable Energy Torch to carry

His wife abandons the support vehicle and runs beside him with ever-increasing size group.

Thirty more supporters waiting in the carpark as he arrives.

7.14 pm Lindsay's feet touch the water at River Heads (north) boat ramp, to complete the river circuit

Cindy Singho and family perform Aboriginal Welcome Dance

THE MUD MARATHON MAP

At the finish... 14hours, 81 km later

81 kilometres in 13 hours 53 minutes = average 5.8 km per hour at age 60 years old

(through salt water, mangrove thickets, mud, creek crossings, bushtracks, gravel roads & bitumen highways)

Congratulations!!

See http://picasaweb.google.com/greatermary/LindsayTitmarshSMaryMudMarathon for more photos as they become available.