Burke Summary (2007)

The long story of why did didn't run on Sunday. :-)

The wire worked perfectly on Saturday. Saturday night we had a HUGE thunder storm. Sunday morning we found we couldn't communicate above check 3. After searching for an hour an a half we found a place in the wire above check 4 that was shorted and had burnt insulation. As near as we could tell we got a large current on the wire (not a direct lightning strike). The current found a path to ground and melted the insulation off the wire in two spots close together.

We fixed the spot and thought we were all set but then found out that we couldn't communicate from check 7 to Finish. This problem turned out to be much harder and a couple hours later we were still looking for the problem. At about 11:30 it started raining and we decided to take an early lunch. The rain and the fact that we still couldn't say how much longer it would take to fix the wire prompted us to call the event at lunch.

After lunch we drove the hill and removed all the head sets from the wire and Walter Clark used his multi-meter and wire probes to measure the resistance between the two strands of wire at various points as we drove up the hill. This did allow us to finally track down the problem to a splice at turn 29. The exterior of the splice looked fine but internally there was a spot where insulation was bare. It's not clear if the insulation was damaged by electrical current from the storm or by someone driving over the wire and then having the very heavy driving rain push water into the connection and short it.

It was 1:45 when we finished fixing the wire. Getting workers up the hill and getting going would have meant we started running at maybe 2:30, so it was a good thing that we called the event at lunch.

The good news is we found out that if all the headsets are pulled off the wire you can find the short by measuring resistance until it goes to zero. In theory it's possible to calculate the distance to the short if you know the resistance per foot of the wire. Walter Clark has a sample of the wire and he is going to get that value for us.

It was an adventure. I also got lots of practice backing up the hill since Arlo's truck was too long to turn around in most places. You can go pretty fast in reverse with a little practice and the hairpin turns are really easy to take when you have rear steering. :-)

Thanks again to Arlo for loaning us the truck. It made lots of trips up and down the hill, both forward and in reverse.

Kevin Gale