

The Tripod



March 2020

Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance, PO Box 2323, Seward AK 99664
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The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.

The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance promotes public awareness of the Iditarod Historic Trail and its gold rush and Alaska Native heritage by encouraging education programs and historical research, assisting in the protection, improvement, maintenance and marking of the Trail and developing partnerships that foster stewardship commitments and support.

Statewide Trails Conference



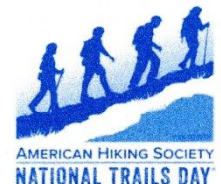
Alaska Trails Statewide Trails Conference will be held April 23-25. Alaska Trails' annual conference provides trail users and the wider public a statewide opportunity for training and networking with trail professionals, government agencies, trail builders and non-profits. They will also be able to share what they have learned and engage in conversations to share best practices and new ideas. There are many ways to enjoy Alaska's trails and the conference brings them together all under one roof. Trails and outdoor recreation are a public health asset and an economic engine for the state and the Trails Conference seeks to raise the profile of trails and their importance to Alaska. Some highlights from this year's conference include:

- Alaska Trails Initiative on Friday
- Active Transportation Track on Friday
- Mountain Bike focus on Saturday

For agenda, registration and other details, go to: <http://www.alaska-trails.org/trailsconference.html> and for more information, contact Steve Cleary at steve.cleary@alaska-trails.org or 907334-8049.

National Trails Day®

Join American Hiking Society as it promotes and protects public lands and trails on June 6, 2020. Register an event on the official National Trails Day® event site: americanhiking.com and your event will be visible to anyone searching for an local event. Event registration is free. Last year, National Trails Day® reached more than 19 million people through social media feeds alone. Registered events may also receive added support and promotion from national sponsors and journalists who use the event database to find events to highlight in National Trails Day® stories.



From the past...

“Seward Gateway” November 24, 1924

TRAIL TO THE IDITAROD RIGGED UP WITH CABINS

(from Kusko Times)*

Matt Vaughn and Bill Pershinger of the field force of the Alaska Road Commission, returned here recently from a trip over the Iditarod trail, the object of which was to make in readiness the relief cabins on that route.

Two cabins, one 15 miles this side of the site of what was once known as the Fitz Roadhouse, owned by A. H. Twitchell, destroyed by fire a few days ago and one about 15 miles the other side were given particular attention by Messrs. Vaughn and Pershinger. The cabins were first thoroughly cleaned of all refuse. The bunks in each place were filled up with fresh spruce boughs and tables and shelving made, and other little details attended to. Each cabin will accommodate six persons, both places being fitted up with what is known as an Olsen heater.



While breaking winter trail they fixed crossings at different points and cut out a number of windfalls along the route.

Mr. Twitchell, it is understood, will get someone to fix up the shed left undamaged at the time of the burning of the Fitz Roadhouse. This shed will make a pretty fair stopping place, nothing fancy, says Mr. Vaughn, but travelers will be most welcome to what is already there. Excepting the stove, everything within the Fitz Roadhouse at the time the fire was saved. Messrs. Warwick and Dehouse packing bedding, blankets, utensils and everything else in the shed, good and tight.

Returning here Messrs. Vaughn and Pershinger broke out the winter trail from Yankee, again traveling over the same route on Sunday, and a little more traveling over it will put the trail in fairly good condition.

*The "Kusko Times" was started by Allen X. Grant in McGrath in January 1921. Due to failing eyesight he sold the paper in 1934. It continued under various owners until 1938.

Annual report

In the Winter 2019-2020 issue of the Partnership for the National Trails System publication "Pathways across America" all the national trails give an annual report, here is the report of the Iditarod National Historic Trail Alliance:

Outreach

Program: INHT and partners showed the movie "Iditarod National Trail-A History" daily during the summer at the Seward Community Library & Museum. It was seen by 4428 people.

Protection

Planning: Chugach National Forest and INHT Southern Trek, with RTCA grant assistance, worked with Partners to organize and implement three volunteer trail events and produce a draft INHT Southern Trek Stewardship Plan.

Maintenance: Volunteer trail crews worked on three trail segments: Rocky Creek, Winner Creek and Portage Pass. Bureau of Land Management repaired building damage from animals and worked with fire managers to save other shelters from wildfires.

Capacity

Strategic Plan-INHT held a strategic planning session and developed a "Strategic Direction 2019-2015" guide.

Funding-INHT continued a Challenge Cost-Share Agreement with United States Forest Service to promote the trail, story and stewardship.

Iditarod Trail Sled dog Race

It is widely believed that the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race was established to commemorate the Nome Serum Run of 1925. Which may also have led to the idea that the Iditarod Trail was created by the Run. The book, *Iditarod The First Ten Years*, published in 2014, clearly states, "Contrary to some thinking, it is not the Serum Run, but the All Alaska Sweepstakes Race, the granddaddy of them all, that is regarded as Iditarod's inspiration."

The legendary All-Alaska Sweepstakes Race is considered the oldest organized long-distance sled dog race in the world. Scotty Allan, a widely respected dog musher in Nome, proposed a long race, saying, "a short race just taking a day, isn't going to prove anything...endurance and stamina are what counts in the North." The Race was run from Nome to Candle and back, a distance of some 408 miles. It was run from 1908 to 1917.

On pages 39-40 of *Iditarod The First Ten Years* there is an explanation of how this misconception started. "One great error in Iditarod history was born when a British reporter mistakenly connected Iditarod's roots with the famous 1925 Serum Run," and quotes Iditarod musher Dick Mackey: "You know, Ian Woody in the 1977 article in the *London Daily Mail* was the first to tie the Iditarod to the Serum Run."

The book goes on to say: "Dick MacKey was one of the mushers who worked with Joe Redington to organize the first Iditarod Sled Dog Race and when Dick wrote Iditarod's first 13 rules on a Wasilla restaurant napkin they were generally patterned after the Sweepstake's rules."

