

The Tripod

August 2019



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The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.

The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance promotes awareness of the Iditarod 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.

National Public Lands Day

National Public Lands Day, a signature event of the National Environmental Education Foundation is the largest single-day volunteer effort for America's public lands. Each year, hundreds of thousands of volunteers come together on the fourth Saturday in September, this year September 28, to assist with various projects designed to restore and enhance public parks, forests, waterways and more. From trail maintenance to tree planting—volunteers of all ages and abilities roll up their sleeves and work side-by-side to care for public lands. The day also features a variety of hikes, bike rides, community festivals, paddling excursions, and other fun outdoor activities—all set on the backdrop of the country's public lands and waterways.

America's public lands aren't the only ones that benefits from National Public Lands Day. Nature offers one of the most reliable boosts to mental and physical well-being. Spending time in the outdoors has been found to improve short-term memory, concentration and creativity—while reducing the effects of stress and anxiety. Volunteering on NPLD is a great opportunity to spend time with family and friends and enjoy the many benefits that come from connecting with nature.

In celebration of the annual National Public Lands Day celebration, September 28, 2019 has been designed as a Free Entrance Day for most National Parks, Monuments, Recreation Areas and other participating federal sites.

For more information on National Public Lands Day and scheduled events go to:
<https://www.neefusa.org/npld>

From the past...

Seward Weekly Gateway" May 29, 1909

MUSHER HAS HARD JOURNEY

W. E. Priestly. Who departed from the Innoko country during the winter, enroute to Seward became afflicted with rheumatism on the way. The disease attacked him in his lower limbs, and when he reached the Yentna river had progressed to such an extent, his feet being swollen to abnormal proportions, that he could proceed no further. He had started from the Innoko with a dog team and ample food supplies to reach another settlement under ordinary circumstances, but his illness delayed him so that his food was entirely gone when he pitched camp at the place where he could go no farther. Stern necessity compelled him to eat the flesh of his dogs to sustain life until some passing prospector should find him.

After a weary wait of fourteen days, two prospectors from the Happy river country, enroute to Susitna, found him, and took him with them. The prospectors had themselves been delayed on the trip and were also without food. It was a weary, hungry party that arrived at Susitna, where they were housed and cared for.



Priestly is still in bad condition and is now enroute to Seward.

The victim of this misfortune is one of the most brilliant writers in Alaska. An Englishman by birth, with a college education, he came to the north years ago. Finally reaching Fairbanks. While there he identified with the miners’ union. The union decided to establish a newspaper in the interest of their cause. and Priestly became its editor and manager. People of the Tanana were greatly surprised to find in a labor paper, articles written in a masterful style, rhetorically and grammatically correct. It soon became apparent that the other papers, espousing the opposite cause, were no match for their more learned, logical and aggressive contemporary.

In the course of his conduct of the paper, Priestly was time and again hauled into court, upon charges of libel and much money was expended by the operators, or certain of them, to land him behind prison bars. In his proceeding they were unsuccessful.

Trail use survey

During June and July the Seward Trail Blazers did a use survey on the first mile of the Iditarod National Historic Trail. The survey was taken at Mile 0.5 on the Trail on the dates and times indicated below:

IDITAROD NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL USE SURVEY- TOTALS FOR EACH TIME PERIOD

Adults, teens and children on trail:	June 21-27 2019 4-4:30 p.m.	June 29-July 5 2019 2-2:30 p.m.	July 8-14 2019 5:30-6 p.m.	July 17-23 2019 11-11:30 a.m.	TOTALS
Walking	428	440	420	339	1627
Running	8	8	3	7	26
On bikes	70	97	35	68	270
On Skateboards	3	3	3	1	10
On Scooters	2	17	2	5	26
In Wheelchairs	0	0	1	1	2
Total	511	565	464	421	1961
Dogs being walked	23	24	25	38	115

The 4th of July saw the most people on the trail, 113 from 2-2:30 p.m. The lowest was 27 on July 23 from 11-11:30 a.m., an overcast day with a cold south wind. The average was 70 people per half hour.

Iditarod Trail up grade

The Girdwood section of the Iditarod National Historic Trail runs from the Forest Service building to Crow Pass Trail’s trailhead, with the New townsite marking the meeting of the Lower and Upper Iditarod Trails. Work on the Lower Trail was planned in three phases, with the second phase just finished.

The first phase was upgrading the trail from the Forest Service building to the rickety wooden bridge across California Creek. The second phase was building a new, much safer bridge and upgrading the trail from the bridge to the water treatment plant on Ruane Road. The final phase is to upgrade the trail from the treatment plant to community center and ballpark.

The bridge was built with a \$17,000 50/50 matching grant from the Kenai Mountains-Turnagin Arm National Heritage Area. The bridge is highly over engineered to protect it from floods and it is also built for snow loads. In winter, the trail can be used for fat tire biking and given the right snow conditions, Nordic skiing. There is also a future plan to place a memorial bench beside the bridge for Dwayne Schultz, a long time Chair of Girdwood Trails Committee.

