

The Tripod

January – February 2025



Iditarod National Historic Trail, Inc. dba Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance
PO Box 2323, Seward AK 99664 iditarodHTA@gmail.com www.iditarod100.org
The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance is an equal opportunity program provider and employer

The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance promotes awareness of the Iditarod National 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.



There's still time to renew: Alliance membership for 2025 were due in December but it's not too late. Renew on our website – www.iditarod100.org/support-us.html. Every member is a partner in our mission to preserve, protect, and promote the Iditarod National Historic Trail.



Events Celebrating the Iditarod National Historic Trail

Iditarod Sled Dog Race #53

March 1, 2025 Ceremonial Start in Anchorage, 10 am

March 2, 2025 Restart in Willow, 2 pm

2025 Serum Run 100th Anniversary Festivities

January 25 – February 2, 2025 in Nome

Follow the Iditarod Race special Eye on the Trail reports for more on the 100th anniversary

[Serum Run Series](#)

Hike the Hill® 2025: Hike the Hill® is a joint effort between the American Hiking Society and the Partnership for the National Trails System to bring together the trails community to advance shared trail priorities with congressional and federal agency leaders. Virtual briefings February 10-13 and in-person (Washington DC) February 23-27. More information and to register: [Hike the Hill Registration](#)

Turnagain Pass Master Plan Draft Plan Webinar: Join US Forest Service and Department of Transportation for a Zoom presentation January 15 from 12-2 to learn about the Turnagain Pass draft comprehensive plan. To receive the link to join the presentation or to learn more about the project, go to www.turnagainpassmasterplan.com

Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance Annual Meeting

IHTA's annual business meeting was held on December 10, 2024 via Zoom. Members learned about the Alliance and its partners' activities and accomplishments during 2024; members also elected the Board of Directors Class of 2026 - Patrick O'Leary, Allegra Hamer, and Mark Nordman. A few highlights:



BLM maintains the Foothill Safety Cabin

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is the federal Trail Administrator for the entire Iditarod National Historic Trail. BLM oversees events on the Trail such as the Iditarod Sled Dog Race and specifically maintains the trail and safety cabins for the 200 miles of the Trail north of the Alaska Range on BLM land. Over the next few years, BLM will work on revision of the Comprehensive Management Plan for the INHT; the original was done in 1986. BLM is charged with implementation of that Plan. IHTA takes this opportunity to thank Kevin Keeler, Trail Administrator, for his years of support and trail expertise – Kevin retired from service 12/31/24.

IHTA Annual Meeting (continued)



Current plat of town of Flat, one of the townships founded during Iditarod Gold Rush 1908-12

The Alaska State Office of History and Archaeology (OHA) Resource Survey Unit assessed 54 buildings in the town of Flat. The structures, last surveyed in 1993 by Rolfe Buzzell of OHA; the 2024 survey goal was to assess current conditions and determine those threatened structures which might be saved.



Building in the Red Light District of Flat. Photo on the left is from 1993; the one on the right is from 2024.

Chugach National Forest (CNF) manages the Southern Trek, a portion of the INHT approximately 120 miles from Seward to Girdwood which is largely accessible for recreational uses year round. In 2024, Federally-funded trail work was primarily in the Victor Creek/Kenai Lake area and Turnagain Pass.



In 2024, CNF staff created a public-facing storymap. It provides information about the Southern Trek and its current projects, while demonstrating the larger and historical nature of the INHT. It serves as a digital guide book/trail guide for recreational use on this popular part of the Trail. Find the storymap at <https://arcg.is/1vXeeL0>

100th Anniversary of Serum Run (Nome Nugget November 27, 2024) - January 2025 marks one hundred years since sled dogs took over headlines nationwide as mushers rushed diphtheria serum from Nenana to Nome, racing the clock to save a community from tragedy. To celebrate, Nome will highlight the dogs, the mushers, and the story for the 100th anniversary festivities from January 25 to February 2, 2025. The Nome Kennel Club spearheaded the effort and brought together community representatives to forge a plan to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Great Race of Mercy, as the Serum Run came to be known.

From the past – Air mail delivery to Alaska became a reality in 1924 when noted aviator Ben Eielson demonstrated it could be done. He flew the mail 350 miles from Fairbanks to McGrath in only 9 hours, cutting mail delivery time to Nome by perhaps 16 days. Despite that air travel in Alaska existed, there were weather, personnel, and other obstacles which made flying the serum from Fairbanks to Nome in January 1925 not feasible.

Carl “Ben” Eielson flew the first airmail flight in Alaska, flying a single-engine deHavilland from Fairbanks to McGrath in February 1924. The feat was reported in media across the U.S. Note the sled dog team ready to take the mail the rest of the way to Nome.

