

The Tripod

March – April 2025



Iditarod National Historic Trail, Inc. dba Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance
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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 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.



National Trails Day® is June 7th. Find a local event aimed at advocacy and trail service by visiting: <https://americanhiking.org/national-trails-day/>
Alaska Trails Statewide Trails Conference is April 24th-25th. In-person at BP Energy Center or virtual. For agenda and to register visit: <https://www.alaska-trails.org/trails-conference>.
Long Trail Feasibility Plan comments due April 14th. For information visit: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2030342/570>



Welcome IHTA Executive Director Betsi Oliver Betsi joined IHTA on March 17, 2025. She grew up in New England and moved to Alaska in 2009 for an internship at the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, a role which launched her career with public lands and connecting people to the Alaskan outdoors. Learn more about her past experience and plans for the future working with the IHTA Board at iditarod100.org home page.

Inaugural Golden Tripod Trail Stewardship Award presented March 16, 2025 at Finisher's Banquet

... and the award goes to Aaron Burmeister! Here's the story:

In 2022, IHTA funded a project to re-mark the trail from Topkok to Nome, partnering with the Nome Kennel Club (NKC) and Sitnasuak Native Corporation. This section of the trail was re-staked with tripods in time for the 50th running of the Iditarod Sled Dog Race. Unfortunately, Typhoon Merbok destroyed most of the new tripods before they saw their first winter season.

The section from Topkok to Solomon was particularly hard hit as the storm drove driftwood up onto the trail, making the trail completely unusable – there was the question if we could even re-establish a trail in this



section. NKC was stymied. Then Aaron Burmeister came to the rescue. He flew his own plane out to Topkok to survey the situation. He devised a plan including bulldozing the driftwood away from the trail and then using heavy equipment to place trail markers in the ground, rather than tripods sitting on the ground.

IHTA purchased new timbers, Iditarod Trail Committee covered the cost of getting the timbers to Nome, NKC reflectorized the timbers. Aaron's company, Tumet Industries, provided the labor and heavy equipment, Kawerak Transportation Program covered costs and Shawn Pomrenke's company, Northwest Gold Diggers, transported the timbers, heavy equipment and laborers from Nome to Topkok and back. (→ page 2)

Golden Tripod Trail Stewardship Award (continued)

Stewardship of the Iditarod National Historic Trail is a critical part of IHTA's mission. To further and to encourage that stewardship, in 2024 the IHTA board established an annual award to recognize a person or an organization making a significant contribution to trail maintenance. Plans are to erect a life-size tripod, likely at Iditarod HQ in Wasilla, and affix plates with the names of each recipient



Aaron Burmeister conceived the plan to re-establish the trail between Topkok and Solomon and brought all the parties together to get it done. Therefore, it is our honor and with great gratitude that the IHTA presented the inaugural Golden Tripod Trail Stewardship Award to Aaron Burmeister.

Left: IHTA Board members Kirsten Bey and Stephanie Johnson present the Golden Tripod Trail Stewardship Award to Aaron Burmeister at the Iditarod Sled Dog Race Finisher's Banquet, Nome, March 16, 2025

EXPLORE Act. On January 5, 2025, President Biden signed the EXPLORE Act into law following the unanimous passage of the bill in the House and Senate. The Act will help ensure every American has access to world-class outdoor experiences – from their backyards to the backcountry – while supporting the businesses, workers, and communities who make those experiences possible. For more information on the Act, its journey through Congress, and anticipated implementation visit the [Outdoor Recreation Roundtable](#).



Hike the Hill® is an annual event to bring together leaders and advocates of the trails community to advance shared trail priorities with congressional and federal agency leaders. In Feb 2025, IHTA President Judy Bittner, Treasurer Lesli Schick, and Executive Director Betsi Oliver participated on IHTA's behalf. Hike the Hill® is co-sponsored by [American Hiking Society](#) and Partnership for the National Trails System. Please visit the AHS website to learn about accomplishments and activities from this year's event

Past and Present Come Together as Nome Celebrates the 100th Anniversary of the 1925 Serum Run

Spearheaded by the Nome Kennel Club and involving several Nome community organizations, a week-long celebration of museum talks, films, exhibits, and family friendly activities culminated in a re-enactment of the last 20 miles of the trail and the arrival of the live-saving diphtheria serum into Nome on February 2, 2025, the 100th anniversary of the actual arrival on February 2, 1925.

[Discovery Channel + Icebound The greatest Dog Story Ever Told](#) This one-hour documentary available on YouTube tells the story of 1925 Serum Run from Nenana to Nome

[Nome Nugget \(weekly Nome newspaper\) articles](#) covering plans, schedule, and final celebration of the re-enacted arrival of the serum into Nome.