

# The Tripod

November-December 2024



**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.



**Time to renew:** Alliance membership dues for 2025 are due by the end of December. Renew on our website – [www.iditarod100.org/support-us.html](http://www.iditarod100.org/support-us.html). This is also a good time to consider upgrading your member level or inviting your friends to join us. Every member is an important partner in our mission to preserve, protect, and promote the Iditarod National Historic Trail.



**Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance Annual Meeting:** The annual business meeting will be by Zoom on December 10<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 am to 1:30 pm. Hear about the Alliance and its partners' activities and accomplishments during 2024; members will also elect the Board of Directors Class of 2026. Board members standing for re-election are incumbents Patrick O'Leary, Allegra Hamer, and Mark Nordman. The Yukon area seat is currently vacant. **To receive the Zoom link, e-mail [iditarodHTA@gmail.com](mailto:iditarodHTA@gmail.com) subject "RSVP"**

**PNTS National Trails Workshop:** The Partnership for the National Trails System's 2024 National Trails Workshop is November 17-21, in Tucson, AZ. For registration information go to [www.pnts.org](http://www.pnts.org).

## Junior Trailblazers at Spencer Glacier

The last week of August 2024, through a grant with the National Park Trust and in partnership with the Alaska Railroad, the Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area (KMTA) engaged 228 students, parents, and teachers from local communities on an adventurous outing to the Spencer Whistlestop. Over three days, groups of students from schools in Cooper Landing and Seward to Girdwood and Hope flooded the train cars with bubbling enthusiasm to do the short trek to Spencer Glacier. This one-mile mostly flat hike begins along the historic Iditarod Trail. Many of the students had never been to the glacier, despite some living within two hours of its lakeshore.



Rangers from Begich Boggs Visitor Center assisted with the day's events. The students were encouraged to participate using the Junior Trailblazer INHT booklet, an IHTA-supported project. This provided the perfect opportunity for local children to get to know their forest and its phenomenal history while experiencing something quite different than a typical "back to school" week.

Chaperones, KMTA staff, the US Forest Service Ranger, and some additional volunteers, all helped students learn about glacial formation,

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## Spencer Glacier (continued):

its effect on landscapes, and how it shaped the transportation that people pursued a little over 100 years ago.

While there are many places to explore along the Iditarod Trail, Spencer Glacier offers some of the most idyllic Alaskan scenery, with an expansive glacial lake full of sculpture-like icebergs and, weather permitting, unmatched views into the Spencer-Blackstone ice complex. Sharing this experience with the bright eyed next generation is truly what building trail systems and partnerships are all about.

*Our thanks to Carolyn Spencer with US Forest Service for the photos and article.*



Will Brennan, Trail Program Manager and Iditarod National Historic Trail Coordinator for the US Forest Service, Chugach National Forest notes: "The Spencer area lies along the AKRR tracks and follows the original INHT route. The Southern Trek parallel route is working to build a recreation trail outside of the dangerous rail tracks."

**BLM Alaska Recreation Summit:** IHTA attended the October 9 Summit in Fairbanks. BLM sought input from agencies and non-profit partners on Alaska-specific recreation challenges and opportunities, with the goal to develop the BLM Alaska Recreation Action Plan, enhancing recreation program capacity, and offering outdoor experiences through partnerships with state and local governments and community organizations.



## From the past...

Leonhard Seppala bids farewell to an ailing Togo in Poland Springs, Maine 1929. Togo was lead dog of Seppala's dog sled team which helped bring diphtheria serum to an isolated village in Alaska in 1925, travelling 260 miles, furthest of any team. From "The Cruellest Miles": "He was partially blind and the pain in his joints was worsening. On December 5, 1929, Seppala finally found the courage to put Togo to sleep. He was sixteen years old"