

# The Tripod



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



### The Trail for all Seasons

The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance promotes public 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.



### Dues due



If you have already sent in your membership renewal **thank you**. Your membership is impotent to help the Alliance achieve its mission.

If you have not sent in your dues renewal, please do so right away



### Annual meeting and election of board members

The annual meeting of the Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance will be held in Anchorage on November 28 and 29.

The first day will be a workshop for the board members at the Campbell Creek Science Center. The annual meeting of the Alliance will be on November 29 at the Lakefront Hotel in Anchorage, 4800 Spenard Road.

Ballets for the board of directors election and proxy forms will be sent out in November. To conduct business at the annual meeting we need at least 25% of the members present in person or by proxy, so it is very important that you send in your proxy if you cannot attend in person.

Board of Director seats up for election this year :  
Seat A Kenai Region: incumbent Lee Poleske, Seward; Seat B Yukon Region, incumbent, Richard Burnham, Kaltag; Seat C At -Large #1 incumbent, Erin Berg, Anchorage; Seat D, Iditarod Trail Committee, incumbent, Mark Nordman, Denali.

### Three Fundamental Challenges



The Partnership for the National Trails System believes there are three fundamental challenges that must be met to fully realize the potential and expectations of the national scenic and historic trails:

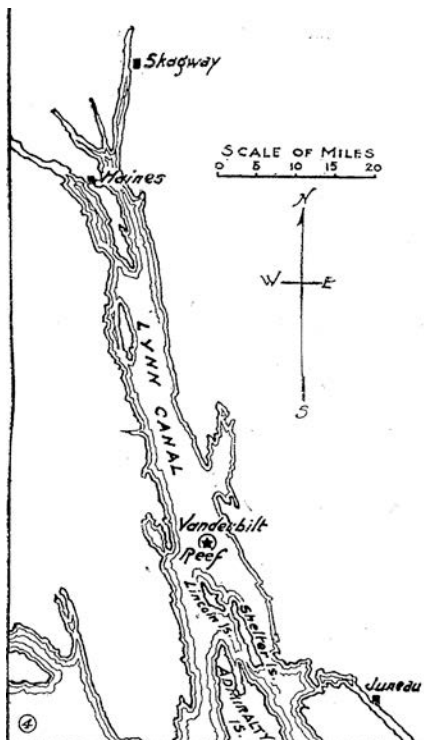
1. Transforming the national scenic and historic trails from a collection of trails into a national land system like the National Park System.
2. Completing the trails on the ground--closing the gaps in the scenic trails and preserving all the high potential sites and segments along the historic trails.
3. Growing all of the national trail organizations to greatly enhance their capacity and resources and that of the federal trail agencies to be able to fully develop and sustain the National Trails System.

From the past...

October 25, 2018 is the centennial of the sinking of the *Princess Sophia*, with the loss of all on board.



The *Princess Sophia*, sailed from Skagway on October 23, 1918. Most of the passengers on the ship were from Alaska and the Yukon going Outside for the winter. Among the passengers were several from Iditarod, including Florence Beaton, her daughter Loretta, age 6 and son John Neil age 4. They were the wife and children of John Beaton whose discovery of



gold on Otter Creek with William Dikeman on Christmas Day 1908, started the Iditarod gold rush.

Sailing in a rough sea with heavy blowing snow and limited visibility, the ship ran aground on Vanderbilt Reef, about 30 miles north of Juneau on October 24, 1918. Strong

winds, blowing snow and high waves made it impossible to evacuate the crew and passengers

and rescue ships had to take shelter in small coves in the area. On October 25 at 5:20 p. m. the radio operator on the *Princess Sophia* sent his last message: "For God's sake hurry. The water is coming in my room." But a violent blizzard had descended on the region obscuring all vision and making navigation impossible, so the rescue ships were unable to go to the aid of the *Sophia*.



It was not until the next morning that they reached the Vanderbilt reef area. All that was visible was the top of the mast of the *Princess Sophia* and the search for survivors was unsuccessful. For days rescue ships and land parties collected the bodies of passengers and crew for transport to Juneau for identification and burial.

Since there were no survivors, the circumstances of the ship's sinking cannot be known for sure. Based on information divers learned from exploring the sunken ship, strong winds and high waves must have twisted the *Sophia* and pushed her off the reef and in the process tore holes in her hull, water rushing in causing the boilers to explode and the ship sank quickly. People who did get off the ship did not survive long in the frigid waters.

There is some disagreement about the number of people on the ship and the number of bodies recovered, the best estimate seems to be 353 on the ship and 190 bodies recovered.

None of John Beaton's family were among the recovered bodies.

There are two good books about the sinking of the *Princess Sophia*: *The Sinking of the Princess Sophia Taking the North Down with Her* by Ken Coates & Bill Morrison, University of Alaska Press, 1991 and *The Final Voyage of the Princess Sophia*, by Betty O'Keefe and Ian Macdonald, Heritage House, 1998.