

# THE TRIPOD

Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance

September 2015

## 2016 dues due

Our membership year runs from September to September, and dues for 2016 are now due.

Enclosed are two membership applications, one for you and one to use to recruit a new member for the Alliance. In the membership survey done last year, the members picked increasing membership as the most important priority of the Alliance. Now is the time to turn that opinion into action.

## Iditarod and Flat saved from wildfire

The Iditarod River Fire, a 104,183 acre wildfire started by lightning on June 20, started moving toward the historic townsite of Iditarod on June 21. The State Division of Forestry's McGrath Area Fire Management Office deployed a crew of eight smokejumpers from the Bureau of Land Management's Alaska Fire Service to the area by helicopter. The smokejumpers conducted burnout operations around the site, halting the fire less than a mile from Iditarod. The smokejumpers spent several days conducting further burnouts and protecting buildings, including two that serve as headquarters for Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race personnel and mushers.

Only 8 miles away, the fire also threatened the gold rush community of Flat, which is home to a handful of seasonal inhabitants with active mining claims and a number of historic structures from the gold rush era. Smokejumpers and a type 2 attack crew from Kentucky protected that community.

"The quick action taken by the Division of Forestry and firefighters to save the two historic sites that hold a special place in Alaska history deserves recognition," said Kevin Keeler, coordinator for the Iditarod National Historic Trail for the Bureau of Land Management in Alaska. "These ghost towns were home to America's last great gold rush, reflecting the days when pioneers used dogsleds and steamboats to supply boom towns and access the gold fields. Both are nationally significant and the townsite of Iditarod is legally protected by the state of Alaska. Given that these sites are literally in the middle of nowhere, saving these places is fantastic."

## National trail support



The Partnership for the National Trails System has published its 2014 "Gold Sheet," a report on contributions made to support the National Trails System by national scenic and historic trail organizations like the Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance. These 28 organizations provide the critical private



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, developing partnerships that foster stewardship commitments and support from land owners, local communities, organizations and others.

### The trail for all seasons



**Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance**  
PO Box 2323, Seward AK 99664  
[IditarodHTA@gmail.com](mailto:IditarodHTA@gmail.com)  
<http://www.Iditarod100.org>



Alaska members who apply for their 2016 Permanent Fund dividend online can donate part or all of it to the Alliance through the 2016 Pick. Click. Give Program.

support of the unique public-private partnerships that have characterized the National Trails System since its inception.

Together, these partners contribute over a million volunteer hours each year, organizing outreach events, building and maintaining trails, working to protect ecosystems and interpreting the trails.

In 2014 the Alliance contributed 15,000 volunteer hours, valued at \$338,250 and had private contributions of \$7,420.

To see the complete "Gold Sheet" go to [www.pnts.org/](http://www.pnts.org/), click on the News and Media heading and there click on the Spring 2015 issue of "Pathways across America." The "Gold Sheet" is in this issue of the magazine.

### From the past...

"Fairbanks Daily News-Miner"  
August 19, 1910

## ABUNDANCE OF TOWN SITES

"If there is any one thing of which there is a superabundance in the Iditarod," says C. A. Newton of the News-Miner staff, who has just returned from the lower diggings, "it is towns and town sites."

The first place to be encountered by one on his way up the Iditarod river is the town of Discovery Cabins, where there are about 30 cabins. No one lives there at the present time. Three miles further upstream comes Richmond, with 110 cabins, including some very fine ones, and all deserted except one that Watterous, formerly of Ester creek, is using as a roadhouse.

Proceeding nine miles upstream from Richmond, one reaches Dikeman or Bubayo, the warehouse town, which is building up slowly.

Next comes a gap of 80 miles by the river and Iditarod city is reached. There is some building going on, but for the most part the lot holders prefer to wait until next spring before erecting permanent structures. In

fact, there is about Iditarod city that same air that characterizes the entire camp, one of waiting, an air of hanging on in hopes that something will turn up to make it all worthwhile. Because of its location high prices are charged at Iditarod city for wood and water. One five gallon can of water commands 25 cents, or water will be furnished by the month for a flat fee of \$30. Wood varies in price from \$20 to \$25 per cord. A business telephone with connections at Flat creek costs \$50 per month.

Eighteen miles by river, above Iditarod city, is Otter city at the mouth of Otter creek. Here E. W. Griffin, Sam Stein and a few other merchants are located.

Nine miles overland from Iditarod city one reaches the town of Flat. Here are four general stores, the same number of restaurants, a roadhouse and other establishments.

Two and one half miles above Flat, is the town of Discovery Otter, which boasts 5 general stores, pool rooms, cigar stores, etc.

Skookum Johnson has started a roadhouse a mile and a half up Flat creek, while still further up at the forks, where the trail branches off toward Willow is another roadhouse, so there is no lack of accommodations for the public in the matter of places to put up for the night. The creek sawmill is at the mouth of Flat creek.

## New school named for Joe Redington

A new Matanuska-Susitna Borough school, named for Joe Redington Sr., opened August 20. The name for the school was selected by online voting.

The \$65 million Joe Redington Sr. Junior/Senior High School is just off Knick Knack Mud Shack Road in the Knik-Fairview area, which if incorporated would qualify as Alaska's fifth-largest city.



The memory of the school's namesake, often called the Father of the Iditarod, played a major role in the opening ceremony. Joe Redington's daughter-in-law Barbara Redington, represented the family at the ceremony and received a spontaneous standing ovation.

Displayed in the library of the new school are the sled Joe used in his first Iditarod race in 1974 and the one he used in his last Iditarod race in 1997 at the age of 80.

The school features a career and technical education focus with offerings that include construction, welding and small engine repair. It also offers conventional courses as well as art and music.