



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

FY 21 Iditarod National Historic Trail Annual Report

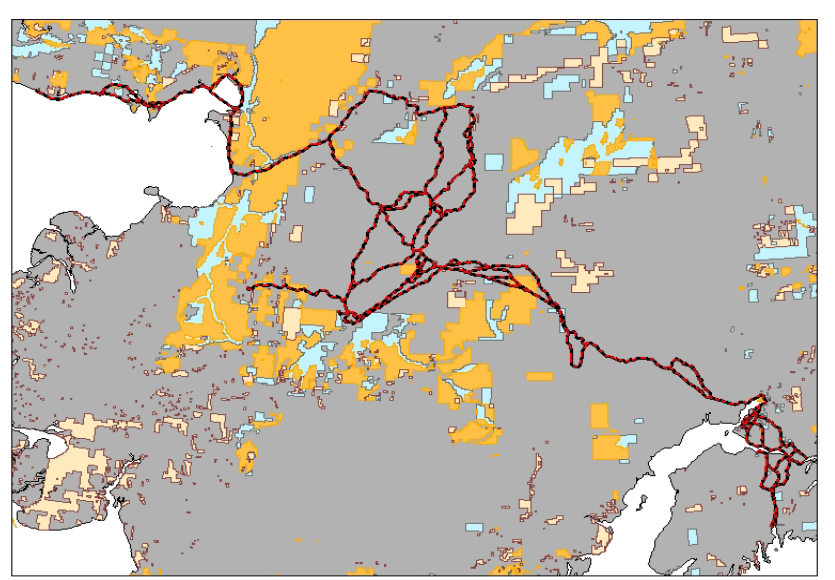
BLM Anchorage Field Office, Alaska



Overview

The Iditarod Trail is the only winter trail in the National Trails System and the only Congressionally-designated National Historic Trail in Alaska. The **Bureau of Land Management** is the federal *Trail Administrator* of the entire Iditarod NHT system, with BLM's Anchorage Field Office (AFO) handling this job since the Trail was designated by Congress in 1977.

Half of the historic Trail is located on State of Alaska public lands, another 30% on public easements crossing private Native lands, and 20% is located on federal Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service lands. (BLM lands are shown in orange on the map of the Trail system to the right.)



As the designated Trail Administrator, BLM facilitates efforts by volunteers and local, state, and federal agencies on behalf of the entire trail. Work is guided by an interagency comprehensive plan developed and adopted in the mid 1980's.

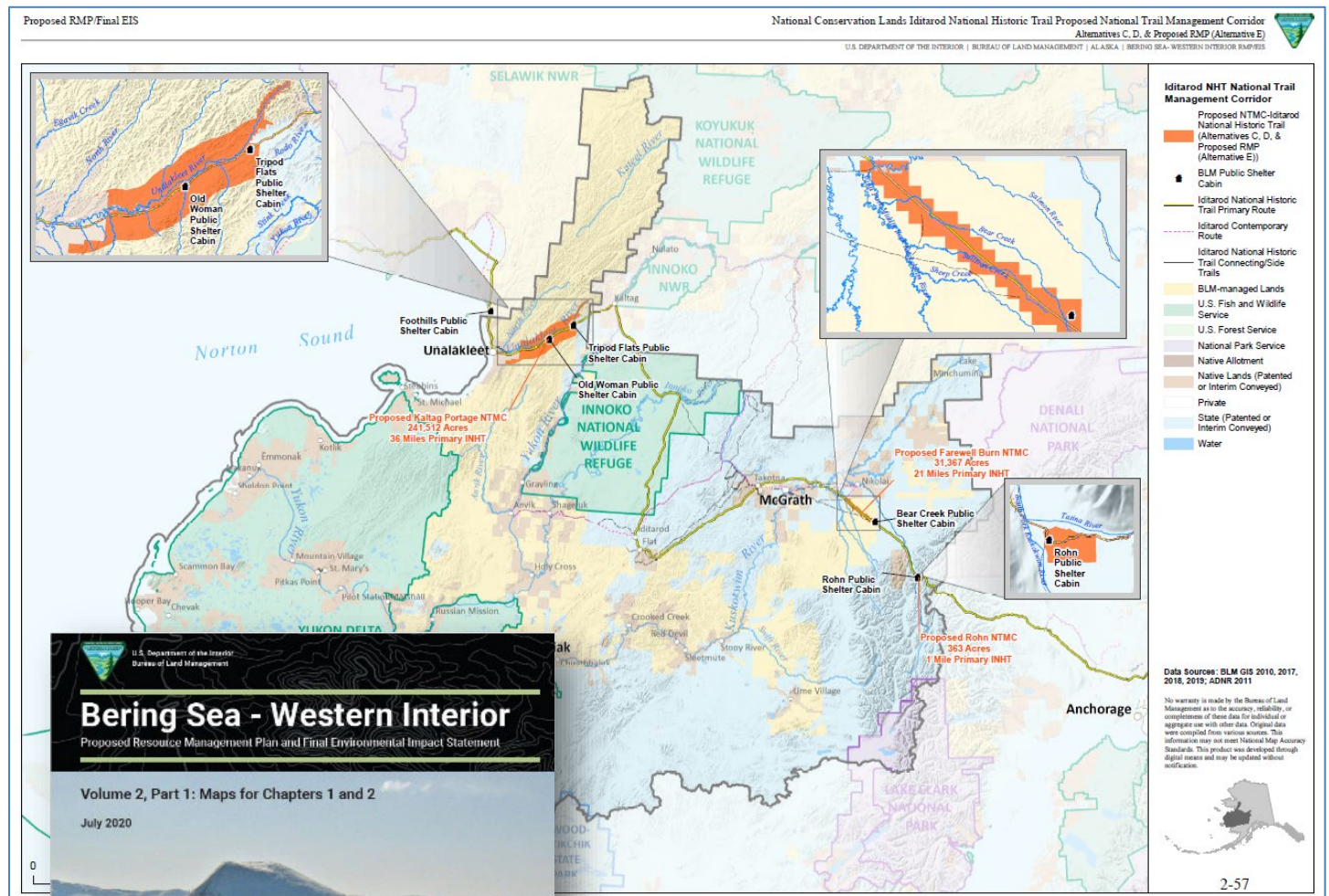
Along with administering the system, BLM maintains about 200 miles of the Trail, including five public shelter cabins on the route. The portion of the main trail on BLM lands is managed as part of BLM's **National Conservation Lands**.



BLM relies entirely on aircraft access for field operations on the Iditarod NHT. FY 2021 was the second year in a row that Covid impeded BLM field operations along the Trail. Three fixed wing missions were completed, but another two were canceled due to bad weather or a lack of aircraft. And field operations from the tiny villages that form the rural hubs for BLM operations on the Trail-- Unalakleet and McGrath--were not attempted due to a lack of commercial flights or community quarantines. Here a BLM Ranger Pilot unpacks an engine blanket at BLM's Rohn Public Shelter Cabin on the Trail in the Alaska Range.

BLM signs Record of Decision establishing 300,000 acres of National Trails Management Corridor along BLM Iditarod National Historic Trail

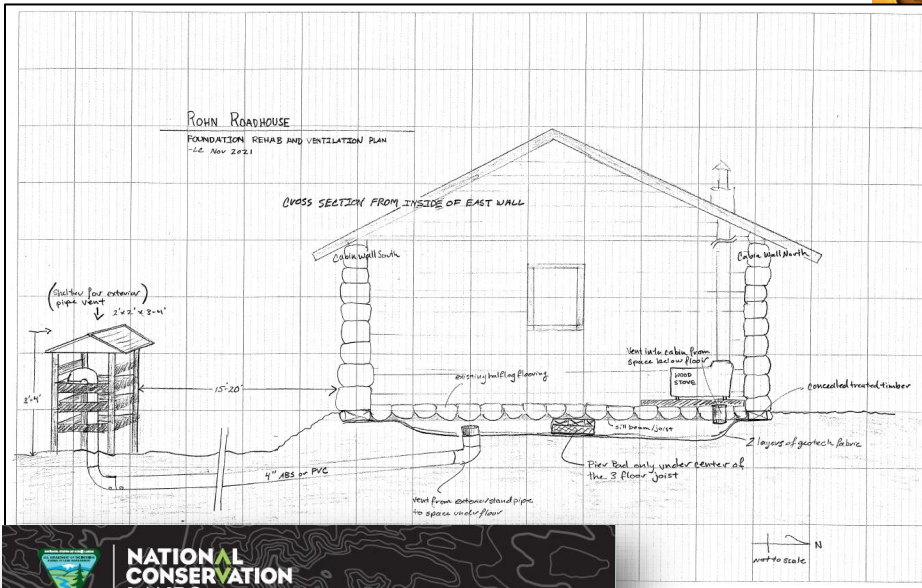
BLM signed a Record of Decision (ROD) for BLM lands in the Bering Sea-Western Interior Resource Management Plan (BSWI RMP). The Plan includes establishment of two National Trail Management Corridors (NTMC's) on the longest segments of the Iditarod NHT managed by BLM. The Corridor's encompass almost 300,000 acres, and include management prescriptions that prioritize conservation of the nature, character and of the National Trail. Because of the Trail's largely intact significant historic and natural values, these segments are also eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.



National Trail Management Corridors (NTMC's) are shown in orange on the above map from the Plan. The Iditarod National Historic Trail and Old Woman Mountain, a significant natural and cultural resource located in the middle of the NTMC outside of Unalakleet, is seen on the cover of the BSWI Resource Management Plan.

Contracts and partnerships provide force-multiplier for BLM Iditarod NHT initiatives

BLM developed a new partnership to plan for the repair of the foundation and floor for the historic Rohn Public Shelter Cabin. A historic preservation specialist from Denali National Park was flown to BLM’s historic Rohn Public Shelter Cabin to develop a restoration plan for the rotting floor and foundation. Planning is underway for a restoration crew from Denali Park to undertake the work in summer 2022.



NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

National Scenic and Historic Trails Inventory, Assessment, and Monitoring Methodology

Volume 1: Methodology, BLM Technical Reference 6280-1



BLM’s Iditarod NHT program, working with BLM’s Headquarters National Trails program, established a new contract to update the GIS inventory of entire Iditarod NHT system to current National Trail System data standards. Under the National Trails System Act, the Administrator for each National Trail is required to steward National Trails data to contemporary standards. The year and half project will review and upgrade trail geodatabases to the framework established in the manual shown at left. Nationally-recognized firm Logan Simpson, who developed the manual, was selected as contractor.

Pilot Trail Ambassador Project Launched

BLM developed a new partnership with Chugach State Park and Chugach National Forest to undertake the first-ever Iditarod National Historic Trail-Crow Pass Ambassador's Project. BLM funded, hired and managed two Student Conservation Association interns via an existing BLM grant agreement with SCA. The crew provided weekly visitor contact and resource monitoring between Memorial Day and Labor Day on the heavily-used 23 mile segment of the Iditarod NHT, contacted over 400 users, monitored 65 official and unofficial campsites, assisted in trail repair work, and provided observations for trail management.

2021 Season Report Iditarod National Historic Trail Crow Pass Ambassador Project



Written by: Clayton [Rudiger](#) & Karl Boehmer

Project cooperators: [Chugach State Park](#) / [Chugach National Forest](#) / [Eagle River Nature Center](#) / [BLM Iditarod National Historic Trail Program](#)



Multiple Outreach Efforts Create New Resources for Outdoor Education and Distance Learning

BLM's Campbell Creek Science Center continued partnership efforts to provide new resources for educators and others around the country and in Alaska that draw from the fascinating history of the Iditarod National Historic Trail.

"Go for the Gold", an online do-it-yourself Natural Learning Resource by the Science Center, takes players on an imaginary trip up the trail from Seward to Iditarod back in 1912. Players visit roadhouses from the period and make choices that affect their progress in the game.

The Science Center worked with partners at the IHTA, US Forest Service, and Anchorage Park Foundation to develop and deliver the Take It Outside program, a series of 16 webinars for teachers. In the photo below, instructors 'live-broadcast' during Covid from an municipal park learning lab in an Anchorage park.



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Campbell Creek Science Center

Go for Gold: Travel the Iditarod Trail

The Iditarod National Historic Trail was once the way to get from the coast to gold prospecting areas in Interior Alaska. Transport back in time to become a musher discovering the opportunities and challenges of traveling the Trail during Alaska's gold rush through this interactive game.

Directions

1. In this game, you will become a musher driving a sled pulled by a team of hearty dogs. You will travel from one end of the trail to the town of Iditarod. Review the trail map on page 2 before you begin your journey.
2. To set up the game, print the game signs or scroll through them on your mobile device or computer.
3. Directions on the signs will guide you along the trail. Start at sign 1 and read the instructions to begin the game.
4. Each sign includes a phrase that was used during the gold rush. Can you figure out what each one means? Look up their definitions on the final page.

Materials

- Game signs (either printed or on your mobile device)

Questions

- What challenges did people face while traveling along the Iditarod Trail?
- What qualities did people and dogs need to travel the Trail?

If you print the signs:

- Cut signs along the dotted lines and lay them on the ground in order from 1-18. Spread them out, placing 1 and 18 as far apart as you can to better imitate how long the Trail is.

If you are using your mobile device:

- Scroll to Sign 1 and read the instructions to begin. Take five big steps between each sign to imitate traveling the Trail.

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Anchorage, AK 99507

Many of the same partners worked on the development of a Junior Trailblazer handbook, which teaches the history of the Trail while instilling lessons on stewardship and adventure. Public release of the document is planned for 2022.

IDITAROD NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

Junior Trailblazer

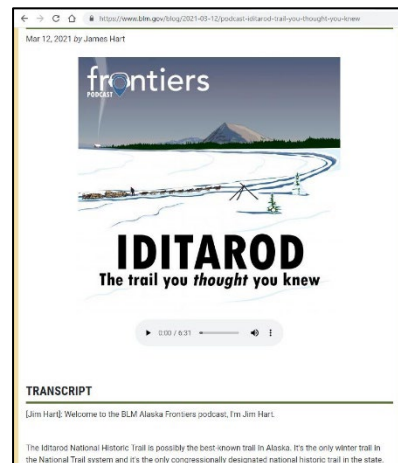
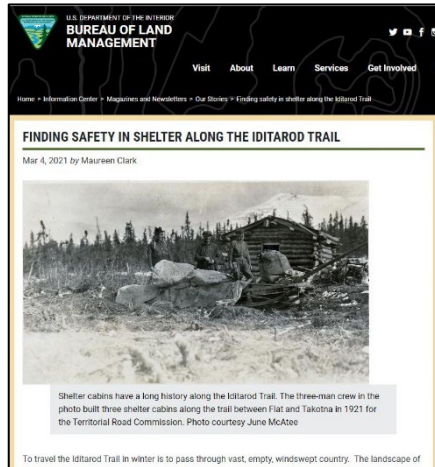
What is the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT)?

The INHT is a system of trails. Some of those trails first connected Alaska Native Villages. Others opened up Alaska for the gold rush. Together they celebrate Alaska's dog mushing legacy and continue to be vital for travel and recreation across Alaska today.

What is a National Historic Trail?

All National Historic Trails played an important role in America's history—so important that Congress gave them this special designation. The Iditarod Trail is the only National Historic Trail in Alaska.

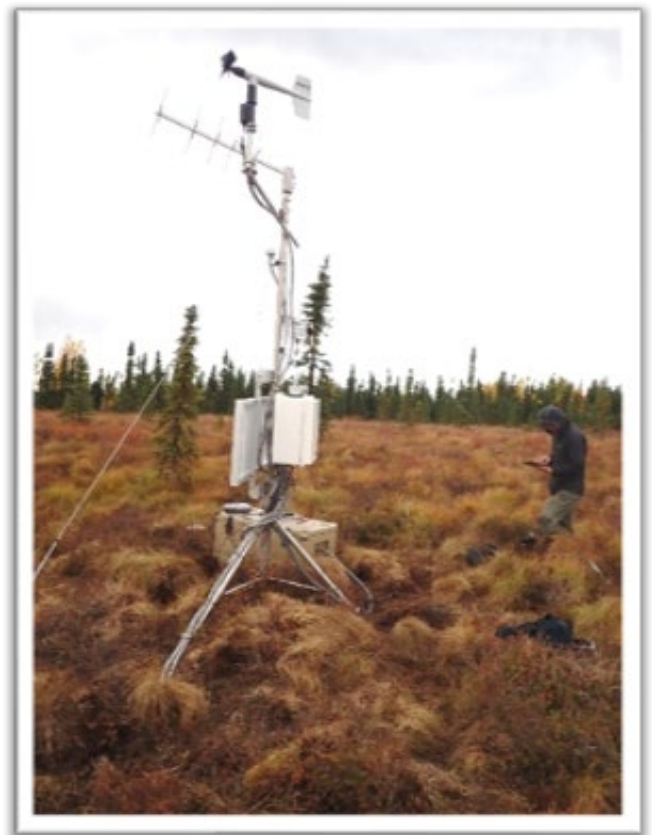
BLM's State Office produced several internet-based media products that got wide distribution.



Find the blog on historic shelter cabins along the Trail at <https://www.blm.gov/blog/2021-03-04/finding-safety-shelter-along-iditarod-trail>. And the Iditarod podcast can be found at <https://www.blm.gov/blog/2021-03-12/podcast-iditarod-trail-you-thought-you-knew>

Permafrost Monitoring Stations Installed Along Trail

A 2021 BLM field project that culminated years of preparation was the installation of two permafrost monitoring stations along the Iditarod NHT in the Farewell Burn. Data from the new stations will help BLM understand conditions along the trail and how the trail is affecting underlying permafrost. Data will also address questions important to a wide group of researchers across Alaska and the global permafrost research community. Station data will be included in future state and global permafrost modelling updates conducted by research institutions such as the University of Alaska Fairbanks Geophysical Institute.



For more information on BLM's Iditarod National Historic Trail program, see <http://www.blm.gov/alaska/iditarod> or contact the Trail Administrator, Kevin Keeler at (907) 267-1246 or kkeeler@blm.gov.