

# ANNUAL REPORT

## FISCAL YEAR 2021

### IDITAROD HISTORIC TRAIL ALLIANCE

TRAIL

STORY

STEWARDSHIP

The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance, a.k.a Iditarod National Historic Trail, Inc., collaborates with partners in the protection, improvement, repair and marking of the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT). The Alliance promotes public awareness of the Iditarod Trail, its gold rush history and Alaska Native heritage, through education programs and historical research. The Alliance develops partnerships that foster stewardship commitments and support from land owners, local communities, organizations and individuals.

With the INHT Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) as a common guide, the Alliance works with the BLM, the federal trail administrator, and other state, federal, local and private land managers to promote the preservation, enjoyment, use and appreciation of the historic route of the Iditarod Trail. The CMP proposes management of the trail through partnerships. Throughout the year, the Alliance works to bring about the collaboration and partnerships that result in activities, projects and products that, working alone, we could not accomplish. This report covers fiscal year 2021 – October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021.

The pandemic affected projects, interactions with communities, and participation in events.

### TRAIL

The INHT is an important part of Alaska's limited transportation system linking towns, villages, and historic sites from Seward to Nome with interconnecting trails creating a 2400 mile trail system. Properly marked trails are important for providing safe travel for all who travel this beautiful and historic trail. The northern segment of the trail is notorious for blizzards that limit visibility and movement along the trail. Without reflectorized tripods, safe travel can be prohibitive. The Iditarod Historic Trail is used for winter travel by villagers to and from Nome, recreational uses though mushing, snow machining, skijoring, skiing, hiking and fat biking and by the Iditarod Dog Sled Race.

- The Nome Kennel Club (NKC), with grant assistance from the IHTA, finished work and signage on their Topkok shelter cabin rehabilitation project, located about 43 miles southeast of Nome along the Iditarod Trail between the Safety and White Mountain. The NKC, founded in 1907 for the purpose of running the infamous All Alaska Sweepstakes sled dog race, is the oldest kennel club in the world, with the mission to

promote sled dogs and sled dog racing in the region. They maintain several shelter cabins in the region which serve the mushing and local trail using community.

- The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance (Alliance) funded a new Nome Kennel Club (NKC) project to improve trail marking by placing reflectorized tripods on the Iditarod Trail between Topkok and Nome, Alaska. Placing new tripods and replacing dilapidated ones will improve the traveler safety along the INHT. This project helps fulfill the trail improvement and safety goals set out in the *INHT Comprehensive Management Plan*. Other partners in the project providing are Iditarod Trail Committee and Bering Straits Native Corporation. The NKC wishes to complete the project to improve safety of the trail in celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Iditarod Sled Dog Race, March 2022.
- The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance (Alliance) provided a INHT Improvement Project Grant to the White Mountain Native Corporation (WMNC) to assist with a replacement shelter cabin construction project along the Iditarod Trail between White Mountain and Nome, Alaska to improve the safety of travelers. The cabin currently located between White Mountain and Nome is damaged from glaciation and bears and needs to be replaced. The IHTA grant provides funds for materials and transport of the building materials to the cabin location. The White Mountain Native Corporation will build the replacement cabin with volunteer labor. The project helps fulfill the trail improvement and safety goals set out in the *INHT Comprehensive Management Plan*.
- The City of McGrath's Iditarod Trail Blazers volunteers performed maintenance work on the Carlson Crossing Safety Cabin.

## STORY

- Passport Stamps for the Iditarod National Historic Trail are in fourteen locations.
- Newsletter *TRIPOD* published and distributed to members monthly.
- DVD on the history of the Iditarod National Historic, the booklet "Walter Goodwin – Trail Blazer", edited by Thom Ely and Cherie Norton and "Frozen Trail" by Hannah Moderow are available for distribution and sale.
- Iditarod Trail to Every Classroom (iTREC!), the place-based service learning professional educator training program, completed its tenth year. The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance, the Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Forest Service jointly administer the iTREC! education program. Forced to cancel in-person training by the pandemic, the program went online with a Webinar series starting in 2020 and continuing into the 2021-2022 school year. The program offers educators an opportunity to sign up for University of Alaska credit for attending the webinar series.
- The Alliance regularly posts information about the INHT throughout the year on its webpage, Facebook, and Twitter social media venues.
- The Alliance contracted with a graphic designer to develop an INHT children's activity booklet. The Forest Service, BLM, and the Alliance are collaborating on the content for the booklet. Anticipated completion date is March 2022.

- The Seward Trail Blazers and the Resurrection Bay Historical Society showed the movie “Iditarod National Historic Trail – a History” weekly from May to September at the Seward Public Library, free to the public.
- The Alliance entered into an agreement with the University of Alaska, Archives, to conduct and archive oral history interviews that document the process and designation of the Iditarod National Historic Trail and the founding of the Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance and to create an Iditarod National Historic Trail Project Jukebox to showcase these interviews along with supporting documents, photographs and film that help to tell this story.
- The *INHT Educator Resource Guide* was completed and is available on the Alliance’s webpage to educators and others interested in outdoor learning.
- Work started on a video highlighting the INHT Crow Pass Trail segment’s history.

## STEWARDSHIP

- In McGrath, the Alliance Board member and the Toklat Museum worked together to provide INHT information during the Iditarod Dog Sled Race as the racers passed through the town.
- To encourage collaboration, the Alliance held meetings with partners throughout the year. These include monthly teleconference meetings with Board members and agency partners; an annual work session and meeting with agencies, organizations, and members in December 2021. The Alliance and partners are working together to develop, interpret and protect the Iditarod National Historic Trail. The meetings encouraged collaboration in all aspects of management and interpretation of the INHT as directed by the Comprehensive Management Plan.
- The *INHT Southern Trek Stewardship Plan* to increase local awareness, appreciation, and long-term stewardship of the trail was in effect in 2021 despite the pandemic. The Chugach National Forest partnered with Alaska Trails to sponsor volunteer trail work events on the Southern Trek. This project helps fulfill the volunteer stewardship project goals set out in the *INHT Southern Trek Stewardship Plan*, which was developed with IHTA’s Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program planning grant for the Chugach National Forest.
- To encourage collaboration, the Alliance held meetings with partners throughout the partners; an annual work session and meeting with agencies, organizations, and members in November 2018; and a strategic planning meeting with Board of Directors and federal partners in May 2019. The Alliance and partners are working together to develop, interpret and protect the Iditarod National Historic Trail. The meetings encouraged collaboration in all aspects of management and interpretation of the INHT as directed by the Comprehensive Management Plan.



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