

TRIPOD

March 2023



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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 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.

2023 IDITAROD SLED DOG RACES

The 2023 Junior Iditarod Sled Dog Race started at 10 am on Saturday, February 25th, at Knik Lake. Musherers traveled from the start to the halfway point at Yentna Station Roadhouse where they took a 10-hour layover. They returned the next day along the same route to the finish at Knik Lake. Emily Robinson, 15, from Nenana, crossed the finish line at 12:37 pm to win the 150 miler for mushers 14 to 17 years old. This winter she has won the Alpine Creek Excursion, the Willow 150, the Yukon Quest 80 and the Willow Junior 100.

The ceremonial start of the 2023 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race took place in Anchorage, Sunday, March 5. This is the 51st running of the Iditarod, but it's 33 mushers are the smallest field ever to start the race. Brent Sass, last year's race winner, is considered the front runner to win the 2023 race. Peter Kaiser the first Yupik and 5th Alaska Native to win the race, is the field's only other ex-champion. The ceremonial start ends at Campbell Air Strip. From there the dog teams were trucked to Willow for the official start at 2 pm. The winner is expected in Nome about 9 or 10 days after Sunday's start.

FROM THE PAST...

Iditarod Pioneer March 18, 1916

USE AEROPLANES IN MAIL SERVICE

Considerable interest has been aroused in this city since the last Fairbanks newspapers arrived, bringing word that Postmaster General Burleson has called for bids for an aerial mail service between various points in Alaska, which are to be opened on May 12. The feasibility of this plan of carrying mail in the territory has been conceded for some time past, and certain Iditarod men have for months been considering the advisability of establishing an aerial service between this city and Seward. According to the reports the post office department figures on having the service for 12 months in the year. The call for bids stipulates for the delivery three

times a week between Valdez and Fairbanks, Fairbanks to Tanana three times per week, Tanana to Kaltag twice each week, Kaltag to Nome twice each week, Seward to Iditarod twice each week, Iditarod to Nome twice each week.

According to statements attributed to the Postmaster General, this mail service will be the best that can be offered in any place in the world, considering the distances covered. The department intends, under these new plans, if they can be worked out, to see that all the first and second class mail goes through, and if possible some of the parcel post matter will be handled by aeroplane. Since announcement was made that the airplane service would be instituted the postmaster general has had numerous conferences with the makers of aeroplanes and he is given the assurance by them that it will be entirely practicable, notwithstanding the extreme cold of some sections in the winter. Some of the manufacturers are said to be considering the possibility of passenger service in connection with the mail contracts and if awarded the contracts will build machines large enough to carry several passengers.

The Postmaster General is quoted as saying that ever since taking office the Alaska mail service has been a cause of annoyance to him and his assistants. (It may be remarked parenthetically that it could not possibly have caused as much annoyance to him as to the victims of the service.) He has received innumerable complaints regarding the poor service rendered and recognized the fact that they were justifiable. He has realized for some time that something ought to be done but has been unable to determine upon the means of improving the service. At last came the suggestion of aeroplanes and after going into the matter the department has come to the conclusion that aeroplanes can render better service and for particularly the same money as it being spent at the present time.

ALASKA LONG TRAIL IN THE STATE BUDGET

Alaska Trails and its partners have recently submitted 14 Alaska Long Trail projects into the FY24 state capital budget, totaling \$9.5 million. These projects will fill key shovel-ready and planning-ready gaps in the section between Anchorage and Fairbanks. The 14 projects include: • Building new non-motorized trails • Existing multi-use trail improvements • Planning studies to identify links between segments • Improving trail access and parking • Wayfinding and cultural heritage • Separated highway paths for safe non-motorized travel. You can find more information, including the specific projects at: <https://tinyurl.com/97e6zmf>

STATEWIDE TRAILS CONFERENCE

The annual Statewide Trails Conference will be held April 12-14 at the BP Energy Center in Anchorage. This year there will be both in-person and virtual options for attendance.

The conference provides trail users and the wider public a statewide opportunity for training and networking with trail professionals. There are many ways to enjoy Alaska's trails and the conference brings them together all under one roof. Trails and outdoor recreation are a public health asset and an economic engine for the state and the trails conference seeks to raise the profile of trails and their importance to Alaska.

See <https://www.alaska-trails.org/trails-conference> for agenda and updates. Registration opens March 3rd. Alaska Trails welcomes your ideas and feedback on how to make the most of this gathering. Send your ideas and comments to: office@alaska-trails.org.

