

Legal Notice
Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact
Environmental Assessment for
Seward to Girdwood Iditarod National Historic Trail,
U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Chugach National Forest, Alaska Region

The Forest Service, Chugach National Forest, Glacier and Seward Ranger Districts, have completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Seward to Girdwood Iditarod National Historic Trail. The EA discloses the environmental consequences, including cumulative effects, of alternatives for reestablishing and managing a continuous INHT pathway, and associated trails that connect Seward to Girdwood at Crow Pass Trail. The Assessment was distributed for public comment for a 30-day period ending July 18, 2003. Based on this analysis, public comments, hearings, and other Agency plans, the Forest Supervisor, Joe L. Meade selected Alternative 4, with minor modifications. This decision approves:

- Approximately 186 miles to be managed as part of the INHT. Approximately 82 miles of trail reconstruction, 77 miles of new trail construction, of which 15 are over-snow only with no tread, the construction of 32 major trail bridges (over 20 feet span), including a footbridge across Trail Lake at Moose Pass, and at least 50 minor bridges and boardwalks. This decision modifies Alternative 4 by including 6 bridges on the west side of Turnagain Pass, which have been analyzed with Alternative 3. These bridges would be designed to accommodate snow grooming equipment. In addition, this decision modifies Alternative 4 with a minor reroute of the trail. Approximately 1.5 miles of trail east of the Mile 12 hill area will be relocated. The new route will generally be within ½ mile of the original route. This minor reroute has been field verified and is a feasible and efficient route with similar effects because it is in the same general location that was considered in the effects analyses.
- Winter motorized use on approximately 105 miles of winter trail. This decision also separates winter motorized and nonmotorized uses to the extent possible and protects the values of quiet, solitude, air quality, uninterrupted nonmotorized recreation, safety, and views of pristine landscapes by reasonably regulating 81 miles of parallel alternative routes for nonmotorized use.
- Approximately 15 miles of winter trail over frozen lakes.
- Summer motorized use on approximately 6 miles of summer trail. Summer motorized use is prohibited on approximately 131 miles of summer trail.
- Approximately 3 miles of water trail over Portage Lake to be open to non-commercial canoe, kayak, or similar nonmotorized watercraft. Access points to Portage Lake would be at Bear Valley and Portage Pass and all boat use would be limited to along the north and east lakeshores. This decision modifies an existing closure to boat use on Portage Lake to allow this type of use.
- Appropriate protection, preservation and management of selected heritage resources on lands administered by the Chugach National Forest.
- Interpretive and informational signing at 36 INHT access trailheads and select heritage resource sites.
- The construction of five new trailheads and reconstruction of three existing trailheads. Locations of new trailheads include: Bear Lake Road; Granite Creek Recreation Area; Twentymile Valley; Girdwood; and Milepost 3.9 Crow Creek Road. Locations of existing trailheads include: Nash Road; west side of Ingram Creek; and east side of Ingram Creek. In addition, this decision

modifies Alternative 4 by including an additional new trailhead at Milepost 2.9 Crow Creek Road. This new trailhead will be developed for year-round use and will provide parking for up to 20 vehicles and will include vault toilets and informational signing. Reviews from resource specialists have concluded that the addition of this trailhead would not add significant effects to resources (project file).

- The construction of up to six new cabins. Locations could include: Johnson Pass trail; Lost Lake/Primrose Trail; east side of Turnagain pass; flatlands in Twentymile; and Berry Pass. Cabin construction would consider historic design theme.
- Moving forward with obtaining permanent easements across State of Alaska, Municipality of Anchorage, Kenai Peninsula Borough, and Alaska Railroad lands.

Copies of the Decision Notice and Environmental Assessment can be obtained from the Forest Supervisor's Office, Chugach National Forest, 3301 C St., Suite 300, Anchorage, Alaska, 99503; the Glacier Ranger District Office, P.O. Box 129, Forest Station Road, Girdwood, Alaska, 99587; and the Seward Ranger District Office, 334 Fourth Avenue, Seward, Alaska 99664-0390. The Decision Notice and Environmental Assessment are available on the Internet at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/>

For additional information regarding this decision please call Chuck Frey, Supervisor's Office, Anchorage, at (907) 743-9557. This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215. Individuals or organizations who submitted substantive comments during the comment period specified at 36 CFR Part 215.6 may appeal this decision. The notice of appeal must be in writing, meet the appeal content requirements at 36 CFR Part 215.14 and be filed with the Appeal Deciding Officer:

Regional Forester, Alaska Region
U.S.D.A. Forest Service
P.O. Box 21628
Juneau, AK 99802-1628
E-mail: appeals-alaska-regional-office@fs.fed.us
FAX (907) 586-7852

The Notice of Appeal, including attachments, must be filed (regular mail, fax, e-mail, express delivery or messenger service) with the Appeal Deciding Officer at the correct location within 45 calendar days of publication of notice of this decision in the Anchorage Daily News, the newspaper of record for the Chugach National Forest. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to appeal this decision should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. Appeals submitted electronically, including attachments, must be in an electronic format compatible with Microsoft Word.

Hand delivered appeals will be accepted at the R-10 Headquarters, Federal Building, 5th Floor, 709 W. 9th St., Juneau, Alaska during normal business hours (8:00 am through 4:30 pm) Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Implementation of decisions subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR part 215, may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period.

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