



Iditarod National Historic Trail

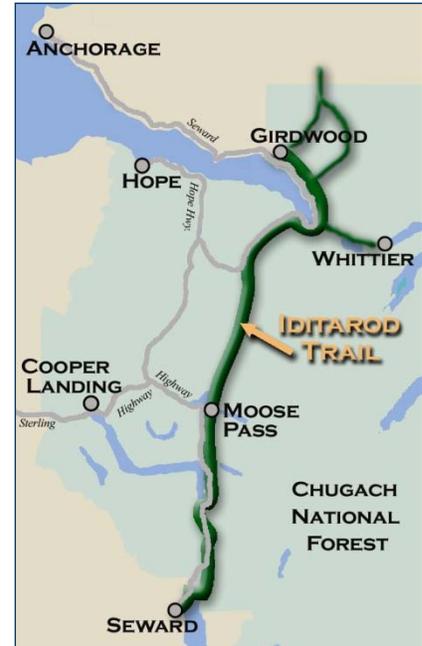


Connecting... Trail, Story, Stewardship

The Chugach National Forest is restoring and developing over 180 miles of the *Southern Trek* of the Iditarod National Historic Trail, connecting the communities of Seward and Girdwood, Alaska. This outstanding national heritage, recreation, and education resource inspires and draws Iditarod enthusiasts, history buffs and outdoor adventurers from around the world.

Commemorating a Centennial

The Iditarod Centennial commemoration began in 2008 and continues through 2012. Together with the Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance and the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service is playing a leadership role in the planning and implementation of numerous centennial projects and activities along the trail.



Legacy Results

The Forest Service has initiated a variety of centennial projects geared toward providing lasting results. These include trail restoration and construction, trailhead improvement, preservation of heritage resources, interpretive signing, conservation education, and volunteer stewardship activities.

Located within an hour of Anchorage and over 60 percent of the state population, the Southern Trek provides year-round opportunities for thousands of residents and visitors to experience the spirit of the Iditarod.

2009 Accomplishments

- **Trail of Blue Ice:** Constructed 1.5 miles of fully accessible trail through the highly visited Portage Valley. This segment completed nearly five miles of trail, connecting the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center on Portage Lake with the Moose Flats Day Use Area. Eventually, the trail will extend another three miles to the Seward Highway.
- **Winner Creek Gorge Trailhead:** Constructed a new INHT trailhead along Crow Creek Road near Girdwood. This trailhead will serve as a primary access point for numerous school groups and visitors each year. Installation of an interpretive kiosk and vault toilet will complete the trailhead next summer
- **Winner Creek Trail:** Improved nearly 4.5 miles of the INHT Winner Creek Trail. This included the installation of over 30 cubic yards of gravel surfacing, hauled in through the partnership assistance of Chugach Powder Guides.



A tied-arch bridge on the scenic INHT Trail of Blue Ice.

- **Rosehip and Upper Bear Bridges:** Awarded a contract for the replacement of a 70-foot bridge across Upper Bear Creek along the INHT Bear Lake Trail near Seward, and for the installation of a new 50-foot bridge across Rosehip Creek along the INHT Upper Winner Creek Trail near Girdwood. Both steel side-truss bridges incorporate the INHT design theme and will be installed during summer 2010.
- **Trail Maintenance:** Maintained over 70 miles of the INHT through the combined effort of Forest Service crews, contractors, and numerous partners and volunteers.
- **2009 Alaska State Fair:** The Chugach National Forest joined its partners the Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance and the Bureau of Land Management to coordinate development of a large, multi-faceted exhibit that showcased the INHT Centennial at the 2009 Alaska State Fair. The Forest Service contributed interpretive expertise, leading the development of the design theme and primary exhibit materials—weaving together the INHT Centennial theme of the Trail, the Story, and Stewardship. Thanks to the coordination effort and significant contribution of the Alliance and the BLM, in addition to many other partners, the Centennial exhibit was highly successful and one of the most popular exhibits at the fair.

Plans for 2010

The Forest Service received \$3.2 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds for reconstruction and improvement for the *Southern Trek* segment of the Iditarod. Projects include the construction and improvement of 26 miles of trail, installation of seven major trail bridges, and installation/replacement of interpretive kiosks at seven INHT trailheads.

The Forest Service has also initiated an exciting new partnership with the Appalachian National Scenic Trail to develop iTREC!, multi-partner, professional development program for teachers to foster place-based education and service learning along the INHT.

Project Cost and Capability

The total estimated cost for the Southern Trek of the INHT is \$26 million. This includes construction/reconstruction of approximately of 186 miles of trail, over 30 bridges, trailheads and recreation cabins, as well as on-site interpretation and the preservation of dozens of heritage sites.

In addition to creating jobs and helping spur economic activity, the recently allocated ARRA funds will result in a substantial amount of reconstruction and improvement along the INHT and will contribute significantly to the INHT Centennial goals.

Progress to Date

The Forest Service and its partners have made much progress in making the *Southern Trek* a reality. Accomplishments since 2004 include 186 miles of preliminary trail location, 60 miles of trail survey and design, over 40 miles of trail restoration/construction, replacement/construction of two major bridges, construction of one new trailhead, and restoration of one historic cabin.

For More Information

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