

# Chugach National Forest

## Bear Lake Trail Iditarod National Historic Trail - Southern Trek



### Seward Ranger District

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Length:** 13 miles (one way)

**Time:** 6 hours

**Elevation Gain:** 450 feet

**Season:** June- October

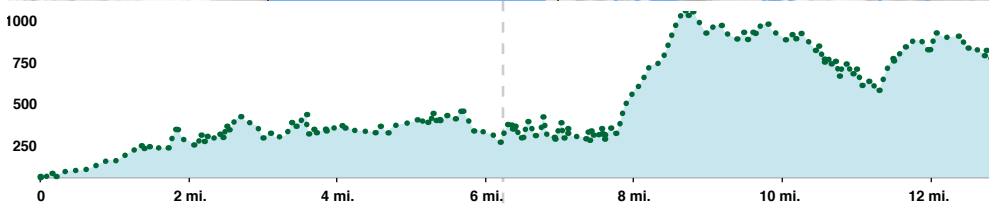
**Public Use:** Moderate

**Grade:** Many steep up and down grades

**Trail Condition:** Dense tree canopy cover, steep grades and sharp turns make this trail difficult to travel in the winter. With good snow conditions this trail provides snowmachiners access to Snow River at mile 11.4 (winter travel across Bear Lake).

**Getting there:** North access point is mile 12 of the Seward Hwy on the east side of the road, just north of railroad overpass. South access point is at mile 2.1 of Nash Road. Turn east at mile 3.2 Seward Highway onto Nash Road.

**Users:** Hiker, Mountain Climber, Cyclist, Runner, Dog Sled Musher



## Map Legend

- Iditarod - Year-round Trails
- Iditarod - Summer Use Trail
- Iditarod - Winter Use Trail
- General Use Trail
- Backcountry Campsite
- USFS Cabin
- Trailhead
- Ranger Station



### PART OF THE IDITAROD NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

The Iditarod National Historic Trail - Southern Trek (INHT) is a 180 mile portion of the 1000 mile-long route. Winter travellers used it from the late 1800s to early 1900, though parts have been used for millenia by Alaska Native cultures. When you walk the INHT, you're walking in the footsteps of Alaska's indigenous people, and its gold miners, pioneers and dogsled mushers.

## TRAIL INFORMATION

**Bear Lake Trail** meanders through dense spruce and hemlock forest. Be prepared for damp, open muskeg crossings.

Travel along the wooded shoreline of Bear Lake where one might spot a salmon.

Blueberries and highbush cranberries can be found along the trail in August and September.

This trail can be combined with the Meridian Lake section of the Iditarod National Historic Trail for a 21.3 mile trip ending at Primrose Campground.

To access the Meridian Lakes Trail, cross the highway and head south for 800 feet to start the next section of trail.

Wildlife includes moose, black bear, wolf, ptarmigan and grouse. Hunting for these species is allowed in designated areas.

Please review **Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)** hunting and fishing regulations for more details.



### RAILROAD HISTORY

In 1904 the Alaska Central Railway began to lay track northward from Seward, harvesting wood from Tiehacker Mountain to be used as railroad ties.

Hundreds of workers came to Alaska to be part of the project. When the railroad company went bankrupt, the federal government funded its completion in 1923.



### CATCHING DINNER

Troop Lake is stocked for fishing and can be accessed via a primitive spur trail at mile 11.8.

Bring your fishing poles and try your hand at catching an Alaskan rainbow.

### BERRY PICKING

Keep your eyes out for berry patches along the trail.

Blueberries, crowberries, watermelon berries, highbush cranberries, raspberries and other edible berries are common along many sections of the Iditarod National Historic Trail.

Remember that berries are a primary food for bears.



### BLACK AND BROWN BEARS

The area around Bear Lake is known for its local inhabitants. An estimated 100,000 black bears inhabit Alaska and lots of them live around here. They outnumber their brown bear cousins, but are distinctly smaller. Both species are dangerous and should be avoided.

Use caution and carry bear deterrent. Be Bear Aware.



## KNOW Before you GO!

Wildlife includes moose, wolves and wolverines, black and brown bears, and Spruce Grouse.

## PLAN AHEAD

You are responsible for your own safety. Proper equipment and good judgment are essential for safe travel while on the Chugach National Forest.

Filter or boil water for five minutes before drinking to avoid giardia.

All creeks present hazards that can be dangerous. Cross creeks at low water levels. During winter use extreme caution when crossing bodies of water. Remember you cross at your own risk.

Winter travel can be hazardous and trails can cross through avalanche-prone slopes. Visit [www.cnfaic.org](http://www.cnfaic.org) for the latest avalanche conditions.

Let someone know your travel plans. Be Bear Aware and keep your distance from wildlife.

Contact a USDA Forest Service office for specific trail safety precautions.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION...

### Seward Ranger District

33599 Ranger Station Spur (mile post 23.5)  
Seward, AK 99664  
(907) 288-3178

### Chugach National Forest

161 East 1st Ave., Door 8  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501  
(907) 743-9500

[www.fs.usda.gov/chugach](http://www.fs.usda.gov/chugach)



- Plan Ahead & Prepare
- Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Dispose of Waste Properly
- Leave What You Find
- Minimize Campfire Impacts
- Respect Wildlife
- Be Considerate of Other Visitors