

Chugach National Forest

Meridian Lakes Trail Iditarod National Historic Trail - Southern Trek



Seward Ranger District

Difficulty: Easy

Length: 8.3 (one way)

Time: 4 hours

Elevation Gain: 600 feet

Season: June- October

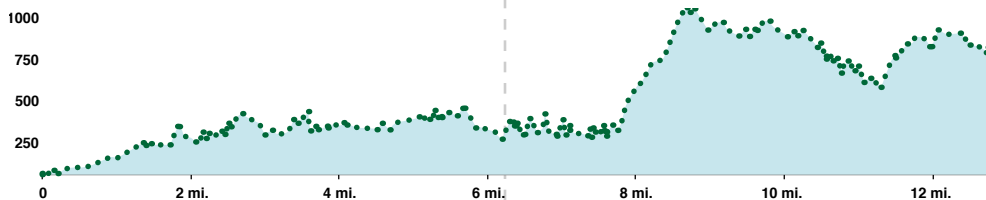
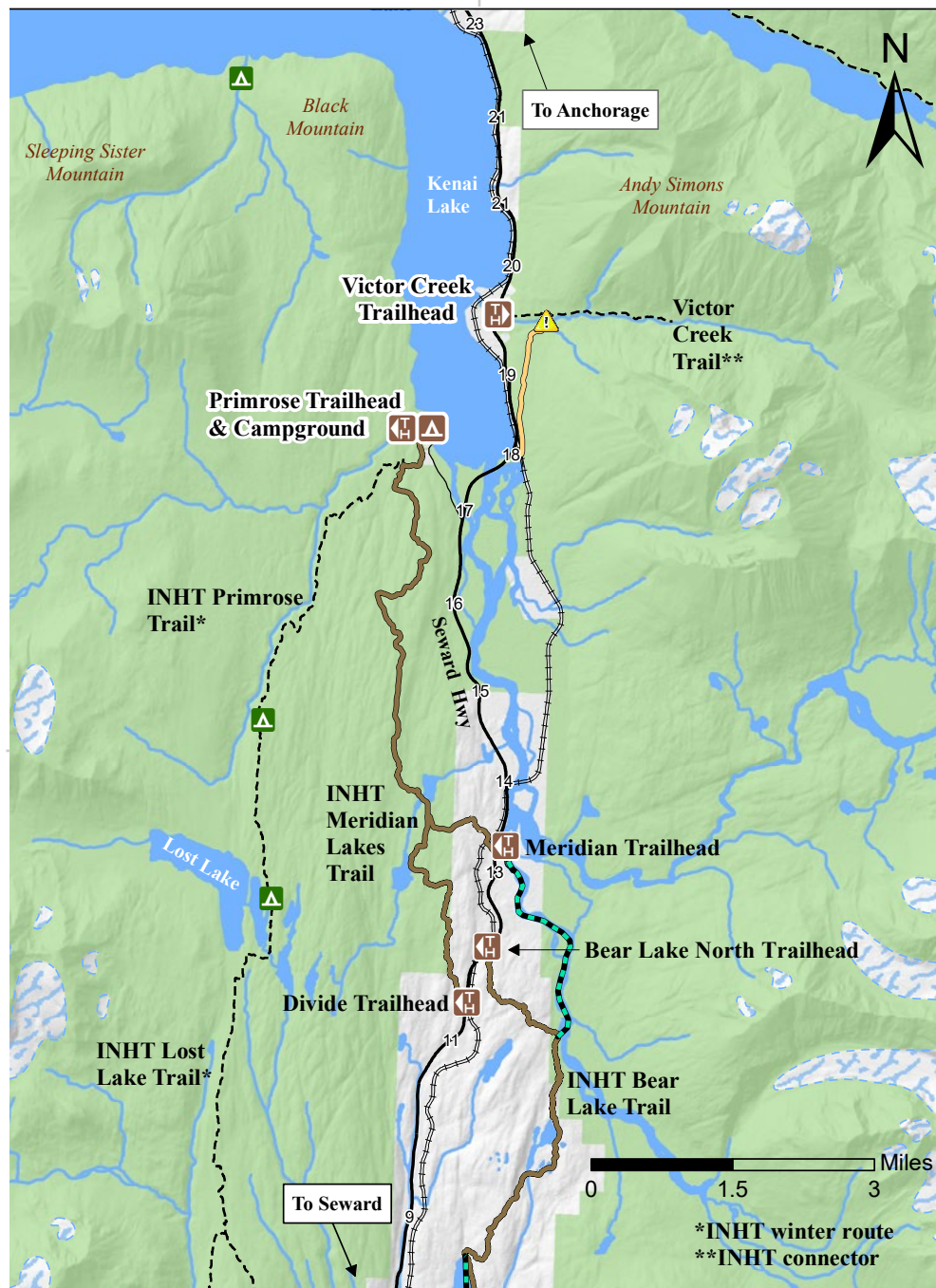
Public Use: Low

Grade: Many up and down grades

Trail Condition: Snow can remain on the trail until early June. Due to dense tree canopy cover, this trail is only recommended for snowshoeing in the winter months.

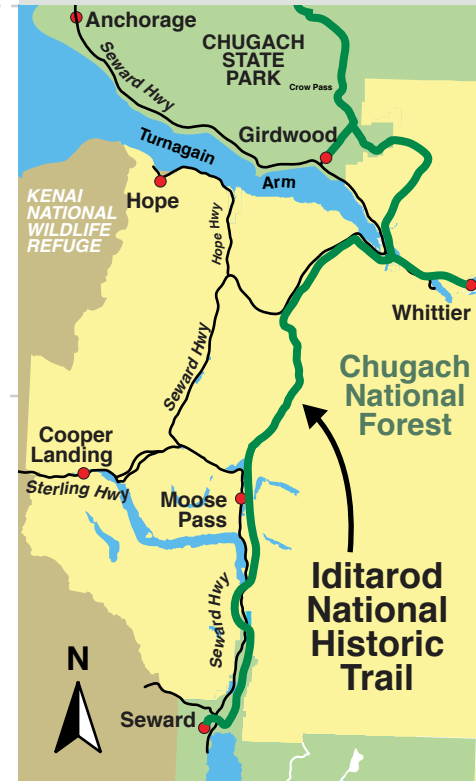
Getting there: On the west side of the Seward Highway at mile 12.

Users: Hiker Mountain Biker Snowshoer Dog Sled Wheelchair



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

Meridian Lakes Trail will take you through dense spruce and hemlock forest. Be prepared for damp, open muskeg crossings.

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

Travelling south to north the trail passes by Leech Lake (1.5 miles), Grayling Lake (2.2 miles) and Long Lake (5.4 miles).

There is a junction to Meridian Lake approximately 3 miles in.

For those interested in a longer hike, Meridian Lakes Trail can be combined with Bear Lake Trail, part of the Iditarod National Historic Trail, for a 15.8 mile adventure.

There are designated dispersed campsites along the trail at Meridian Lake and the south end of Long Lake.

Meridian Lake and Long Lake are stocked with rainbow trout.

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

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



WHY DOGS?

Over the course of Alaska's history many methods of speedy trail transportation have been used.

In the early pioneer days horses and even reindeer had some success pulling sleds, but the efficiency of the Alaskan Husky Sled Dog was hard to match.

Dogs became the gold standard due to their tenacity, intelligence and speed.



LAKESIDE FISHING

Grayling Lake may provide anglers dinner, as its namesake fish are in good supply. Bring your rod and reel.

Both Meridian and Long Lakes are stocked with rainbow trout.

SPRUCE GROUSE

This large bird is known for standing stock-still while hikers walk within feet of it. It relies largely on camouflage, and waits till the last possible second to flee.

They can be extremely hard to spot until they move.

Alaskans have used the grouse as food for years, earning it the nickname "spruce hen" and "tree chicken."



Photo by Jacob Torres

ALASKA ROAD COMMISSION

This commission surveyed, marked and cleared the Seward-to-Nome Mail Trail in 1908, responding to demands for greater access to gold country.

The trail was intended for use by the mail handlers, who used dog sleds on their routes. It was later renamed the Iditarod Trail and today is a treasured remnant of Alaska's historic past.



KNOW Before you GO!

Wildlife includes moose, wolves and wolverines, black and brown bears, Dall sheep, Willow Ptarmigan 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 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.



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The 7 Principles

- ☐ 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