

# Iditarod Educational Packet for Teachers

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Thank you for your interest in using the Iditarod as a theme to connect content curriculum in your classroom. Iditarod has been successfully used by classroom instructors (pre-school through high school) and educators in both private and public educational settings as a tool of instruction, a motivational theme, and an experiential learning project. Academic and classroom results of using the race with students have been impressive and has led thousands of students to academic success while empowering them to read more, write more, solve problems, and use technology as well as set own personal goals. Iditarod is used yearly in all 50 states. Iditarod is also a theme used in summer schools, scouts, and enrichment programs for youth.

Embark along the Iditarod Trail to learning using the incredible opportunities for learning as you embark along the Iditarod Trail and participate in Iditarod Educational Learning Projects. (IELP)

# Facts About Iditarod

## Iditarod:

- Iditarod: is a sled dog race from Anchorage to Nome.
- Starts: the first Saturday in March each year and restarts the following day. The race starts in Anchorage and runs about 11 miles on Saturday, covering a well groomed snow trail from downtown Anchorage (4<sup>th</sup> and G) to Campbell Airstrip. This is considered a ceremonial start and a time of celebration.
- IditaRiders: ride in each musher's sled as a fund raising event for the race.
- Restarts: on the Sunday following the 'Start' Day. The 'time' starts for each musher as they leave the starting line at Willow and head out on the race trail. Mushers start at 2 minute intervals. The difference in starting time is made up during the 24 hour 'lay over' that is required of each musher. This means that only the last musher to start the race takes a 24 hour break from the race. The second to the last musher to start takes 24 hours and 2 minutes, and each musher's 24 hour break is reflected in the differential to put each musher on an 'equal' starting time.
- Ends: when the last musher reaches Nome. The winner is the musher who gets to Nome with the best over all time.
- Runs: from Anchorage to Nome, using a northern trail route in even (2012, 2014) years and a southern trail route in odd (2011, 2013) years.
- 1,049 Miles: is the symbolic length of the race each year. 1000 miles is certainly something 'great' and Alaska is the 49<sup>th</sup> state. The race is run across the wilderness of Alaska, a 'great' accomplishment for any musher and team is their arrival in Nome after a race that may take between 9 - 15 days.
- Miles between checkpoints: are estimations. Each year, the race route and sometimes even distances between each checkpoint may differ slightly.

- The Last Great Race®: is another name for Iditarod.
- Is held because: As airplanes, snowmobiles, (or snow machines as they are called in Alaska) and other changes came about in Alaska, there were less and less sled dogs in Alaska. The once important working animal wasn't 'needed' as much for daily life in Alaska. (delivering mail, carrying supplies, helping minors with their quest for gold, or for recreational purposes) The sled dogs had played an important role in Alaska's history. Joe Redington, Sr. wanted the sled dogs to continue to be a part of Alaska's present day life.
- Joe Redington, Sr.: Is called the "Father of the Iditarod".
- Dorothy Page: Is called the "Mother of the Iditarod".
- The first race: was in 1973 and was run with a different set of rules than today's race. It took 32 days for the last of the 22 teams Of 34 teams that started the race on March 3, 1975, to finish the race. The champion was Dick Wilmarth, Red Devil, AK, finishing in 20 days, 0 hours, 49 minutes, and 41 seconds. The first finish line was made from Kool-aid.
- Teams of 16 dogs leave the 'restart' for Nome. At least 6 dogs must be in line at the finish line in Nome. A maximum of 12 dogs pull the sled at the 'start' of the race, which is a ceremonial start.
- Mushers: drive the sled using voice commands. (Reins are not used!) No whips are allowed. Mushers must take good care of their dogs. Mushers have competed in many races before they race their first Iditarod.
- Dogs: must pass physical examinations prior to the race and are microchipped for identification purposes. Only healthy dogs are permitted to run the race and good dog care is a priority for everyone. These dogs are athletes and have been in training for this race. Mushers and dogs have 'put on hundreds of training miles' before the race begins.
- Checkpoints: (designated stops) are set up between Anchorage and Nome. Supplies are sent in advance of the race so everything mushers need awaits their arrival at checkpoints. Volunteers, race staff, and veterinarians are situated at checkpoints to fulfill duties to ensure dogs are taken care of and the race rules and guidelines are maintained.
- Veterinarians: are at each checkpoint to examine the dogs. Some teams spend longer time at checkpoints than other mushers do, all depending on

strategy and racing conditions, but each musher carries a 'vet book' and veterinarians must make notes on the dogs at the checkpoints regardless of the length of time a musher remains at a checkpoint.

- Excellent Dog Care: is a priority - a focus for mushers, veterinarians, race officials, pilots, and volunteers. Dogs are priority and every means possible is used to ensure dogs remain as safe as they can and that they are given the best of care.
- K9 Athletes of Iditarod: are born, raised, trained, and in excellent physical condition.
- Race Rules: are posted on the Iditarod website.
- Men and Women: enter the same race and follow the same rules.
- Veterans: are mushers who have finished a previous Iditarod.
- Rookies: are mushers who start the Iditarod having never finished the Iditarod before, however, they may have raced it a previous year and scratched or withdrew.
- A Scratch: means that a musher for some reason decides to not finish the race that the musher started.
- A Withdrawal: means that a musher is not allowed to finish the race due to a race judge's decision. If a musher signs up for Iditarod but then chooses to not run the race, that is also considered a 'withdrawal' from the race.
- The winner of Iditarod: is the first person (musher) to reach Nome.
- The Red Lantern: is awarded to the last person to reach Nome and signifies the end of the race, all of the mushers and dog teams are off the trail!
- Volunteers: play an important role in the race. The race would not happen without the volunteers. Thousands of volunteers help out during the race and other times during the year. A HUGE thanks goes to the volunteers for 'making the race' happen each year!
- Staff: a small number of staff work year round for the race.
- Iditarod Headquarters: is in Wasilla, Alaska.
- More people have climbed Mt. McKinley (Denali): than have finished the Iditarod.
- [www.iditarod.com](http://www.iditarod.com) is the official website for Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race®.

# History

- The Iditarod Trail was used as a mail and supply route from the coastal towns of Seward and Knik to the interior mining camps at Flat, Ophir, Ruby and beyond at the turn of the century.
- Dog sled carried mail and supplies 'in' to those living in remote areas. During the gold rush, the dog teams brought out gold.
- As the mining of gold mining slowed, those seeking the gold left the area. The trail was traveled less.
- In the 1920's, airplanes meant easier access to Alaska's interior, travel by dog team was not as necessary.
- With Diphtheria threatening the lives of those living in Nome in 1925, part of the trail was the life saving highway for medication needed. The teams relayed the medicine (serum) from Nenana to Nome.
- In 1967, a short distance race that was a part of Alaska's Centennial celebration that year, was organized by Dorothy G Page and Joe Redington, Sr. commemorated the early use of the trail via dog team.
- A second short race in 1969 was followed several years later by the first "long distance" Iditarod from Anchorage to Nome.
- Congress declared the Iditarod Trail a National Historic Trail in 1978.

# Famous Iditarod Names

**Joe Redington, Sr.** – Joe is honored and remembered as the co-founder and driving force behind the race. He is called the “Father of the Iditarod”. Joe passed away in 2000, but remains a ‘member of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Board of Directors, (Emeritus) and ‘remains on the Trail’.

**Vi Redington-** Vi was the wife of Joe Redington, Sr.

**Rick Swenson** – Rick is the “only” five time champion, champion to win in three different decades, and musher to have completed 30 plus Iditarods. His first Iditarod was in 1976. That year he finished in 10<sup>th</sup> place.

**Dick Mackey** – Dick is remembered as the only photo finish winner in Iditarod’s history, beating Rick Swenson by 1 second. (1978)

**Col. Norman D Vaughan** – In 1988, at age 88, Norman finished the race for the fourth time, and holds the record for being the oldest musher to finish the race. In 1993- 1994 he led an expedition to Antarctica.

**Susan Butcher** – Susan is remembered as the first woman to ever place in the top ten. She was also the first four-time winner of Iditarod. Susan was dedicated to good dog care and was a fierce competitor in Iditarod.

**Jeff King, Martin Buser, and Doug Swingley-** Jeff, Martin, and Doug are 3 time champions of the race. Doug and Susan won 3 consecutive years.

**Libby Riddles** – in 1985, Libby faced a deadly blizzard to become the first woman to win the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race®.

**Emmitt Peters** – Emmitt is remembered as the champion that set a race record pace in 1975 that wasn’t broken until 1980. He is known as the Yukon River Fox.

**Rick Mackey** – in his 6<sup>th</sup> Iditarod and wearing bib #13, the same number his father wore in 1978 during his 6<sup>th</sup> race, crossed the finish line first in 1983, making Dick and Rick the only father and son to have won the Iditarod. (Until Lance Mackey, son of Dick and brother to Rick, won the Iditarod in 2005.)

**Lance Mackey** – Lance, brother to Rick, son of Dick, is the only 4 time back to back champion. (2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010) Lance won in 2007, his 6<sup>th</sup> race (like his father's win and his brother's win, in their 6<sup>th</sup> Iditarod) and wearing bib 13, like his father and brother had done. The numbers 6 and 13 are 'historically' Mackey numbers. Lance also won the Yukon Quest four years in a row. (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008) Lance won the 2007 Iditarod after winning the Yukon Quest only 10 days earlier, becoming the first musher to have won both races in the same year. Lance is a cancer survivor.

**Joe Runyan** – Joe was the 1989 champion and is the only musher to have won the Alpirod in Europe, the Yukon Quest, and the Iditarod.

**Dorothy Page**- Dorothy is remembered as the “Mother of the Iditarod”.

**John Baker**- As the 2011 Iditarod Champion, John Baker, Kotzebue, became the first Inupiaq champion of Iditarod. This was John's 16<sup>th</sup> run in Iditarod.

**Terry Adkins** – Terry was the only veterinarian on the first Iditarod in 1973 and completed the race 18 times.

**Doug Swingley** – Doug, from Montana, was the first Iditarod winner living outside Alaska and he became the second four time champion of Iditarod.

**Martin Buser** – Martin is a four-time winner and was the first musher to break the nine-day barrier.

**Herbie Nayokpuk** – Herbie is remembered as the Eskimo from Shishmaref, the “Shishmaref Cannonball” who raced in eleven Iditarods.

**DeeDee Jonrowe, Charlie Boulding, and Lance Mackey** – These mushers came back to race again after life threatening bouts with cancer.

**Many other Iditarod racers** have raced after facing medical or health situations or have raced maintaining their health while facing medical conditions or have finished the race after dislocating an arm, breaking or breaking bones. An example:

**Bruce Linton:** Diabetes

**Robert Sørli** – Robert was first musher from out of the United States (Norway) to win the Iditarod.

**Dallas Seavey-** Dallas holds the record for being the youngest Iditarod Musher to finish the race. Dallas is a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation musher. His father, Mitch, is an Iditarod Champion and his grandfather raced 4 Iditarods.

**Jon VanZyle:** Jon is the Official Artist for Iditarod, having created yearly posters and prints depicting mushing and the history of the race. Jon also raced in Iditarod. (1976, 1979)

**Jeff Schultz:** Jeff is the Official Photographer for the Iditarod.

**Dick Wilmarth-** Dick was the first Iditarod Champion.

**Dr. Stuart Nelson, Jr.-** Dr. Nelson has played a key role in keeping a focus on outstanding dog care, setting high standards, training staff, veterinarians, and mushers, heading up research, and arriving at solutions to keep sled dogs healthy before, during, and after racing. Dr. Nelson exemplifies the personal and professional qualities necessary to maintain the credibility of the Iditarod as being an outstanding dog mushing event.

**Iditarod Board of Directors-** The Directors are elected by the Iditarod Trail Membership and are responsible for the decisions regarding the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

**Iditarod Staff:** Stan Hooley, Executive Director, and other staff members are hired to uphold the mission statement and guidelines of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. See a list of staff on the website.

**Iditarod Air Force:** These pilots are the best of the best pilots, dedicated to the race, making sure supplies, people, and dogs are where they need to be before, during, and after the race.



## Iditarod Champions:

### **RACE CHAMPIONS & RED LANTERN WINNERS**

<b>Year Musher</b>	<b>D:H:M:S</b>	<b>Musher D:H:M:S</b>
1973 Dick Wilmarth	20:00:49:41	John Schultz 32:05:09:01
1974 Carl Huntington	20:15:02:07	Red Olson 29:06:36:10
1975 Emmitt Peters	14:14:43:45	Steve Fee 29:08:37:13
1976 Gerald Riley	18:22:58:17	Dennis Corrington 26:08:42:51
1977 Rick Swenson	16:16:27:13	Vasily Zamitkyn 22:09:06:06
1978 Dick Mackey	14:18:52:24	Andrew Foxie 22:03:29:44
1979 Rick Swenson	15:10:37:47	Gene Leonard 24:09:02:22
1980 Joe May	14:07:11:51	Barbara Moore 24:09:25:45
1981 Rick Swenson	12:08:45:02	Jim Strong 18:06:30:30
1982 Rick Swenson	16:04:40:10	Ralph Bradley 26:13:59:59
1983 Rick Mackey	12:14:10:44	Scott Cameron 21:04:36:41
1984 Dean Osmar	12:15:07:33	Bill Mackey 19:09:43:33
1985 Libby Riddles	18:00:20:17	Monique Bene 22:03:45:45
1986 Susan Butcher	11:15:06:00	Mike Peterson 20:13:42:21
1987 Susan Butcher	11:02:05:13	Rhodi Karella 19:09:01:01
1988 Susan Butcher	11:11:41:40	Lesley Monk 19:13:22:55
1989 Joe Runyan	11:05:24:34	Bob Hoyt 17:11:19:19
1990 Susan Butcher	11:01:53:23	Steve Haver 21:10:26:26
1991 Rick Swenson	12:16:34:39	Brian O'Donoghue 22:05:55:55
1992 Martin Buser	10:19:17:15	Vern Cherneski 18:13:05:02
1993 Jeff King	10:15:38:15	Lloyd Gilbertson 18:04:19:19
1994 Martin Buser	10:13:02:39	Mark Chapoton 16:16:17:35
1995 Doug Swingley	09:02:42:19	Ben Jacobson 17:06:02:05
1996 Jeff King	09:05:43:13	Andy Sterns 15:23:48:22
1997 Martin Buser	09:08:30:15	Ken Chase 15:09:07:44
1998 Jeff King	09:05:52:26	Brad Pozarnsky 14:05:42:04
1999 Doug Swingley	09:14:31:07	Jeremy Gebauer 15:03:18:44
2000 Doug Swingley	09:00:58:06	Fedor Konykhov 15:05:44:44
2001 Doug Swingley	09:19:55:50	Karen Ramstead 14:23:53:16
2002 Martin Buser	08:22:46:02	David Straub 14:05:38:12
2003 Robert Sørlie	09:15:47:36	Russell Bybee 15:05:30:53
2004 Mitch Seavey	09:12:20:22	Perry Solmonson 15:02:50:36
2005 Robert Sørlie	09:18:39:31	Phil Morgan 15:06:02:57
2006 Jeff King	09:14:11:36	Glenn Lockwood 15:18:08:56
2007 Lance Mackey	09:05:08:41	Ellen Halverson 16:11:56:20
2008 Lance Mackey	09:11:46:48	Deborah Bicknell 15:05:36:12
2009 Lance Mackey	09:21:38:46	Timothy Hunt 15:14:06:22
2010 Lance Mackey	08:23:59:09	Celeste Davis 13:05:06:40 *
2011 John Baker	08:18:46:39**	Ellen Halverson 13:19:49:45

\*\* Fastest winning time

\*Fastest Red Lantern time

D: H: M: S: = Days, hours, minutes, seconds

# The Jr. Iditarod

Each year, the Jr. Iditarod is held the weekend before the start of the Iditarod. The Jr. Iditarod first began in 1978 and runs about 150 miles. Mushers must be between the ages of 14 and 17.

## **PAST JR. IDITAROD® WINNERS**

1978 Mike Neuman Knik, AK  
1979 Clint Mayeur Glenallen, AK  
1980 Gary Baumgartner McGrath, AK  
1981 Christine Delia Skwentna, AK  
1982 Tim Osmar Clam Gulch, AK  
1983 Tim Osmar Clam Gulch, AK  
1984 Tim Osmar Clam Gulch, AK  
1985 Lance Barve Wasilla, AK  
1986 Lance Barve Wasilla, AK  
1987 Dusty VanMeter Kasilof, AK  
1988 Dan Flodin Chugiak, AK  
1989 Jared Jones Knik, AK  
1990 Jared Jones Knik, AK  
1991 Brian Hansen Anchorage, AK  
1992 Ramey Smyth Big Lake, AK  
1993 Ramey Smyth Big Lake, AK  
1994 Cim Smyth Big Lake, AK  
1995 Dusty Whittemore Cantwell, AK  
1996 Dusty Whittemore Cantwell, AK  
1997 Tony Willis Anchorage, AK  
1998 Charlie Jordan Tanana, AK  
1999 Ryan Redington Knik, AK  
2000 Ryan Redington Knik, AK  
2001 Tyrell Seavey Seward, AK  
2002 Cali King Denali Park, AK  
2003 Ellie Claus Chitina, AK  
2004 Nicole Osmar Kasilof, AK  
2005 Melissa Owens Nome, AK  
2006 Micah Degerland Two Rivers, AK  
2007 Rohn Buser Big Lake, AK  
2008 Jessica Klejka Bethel, AK  
2009 Cain Carter Fairbanks, AK  
2010 Merissa Osmar Ninilchik, AK  
2011 Jeremiah Klejka, Bethel, AK

# SPECIAL AWARDS

## **Anchorage Chrysler Dodge Official Truck Award**

- Presented to the Iditarod winner since 1991
- 2010 Dodge Ram 4/x/4 quad cab pick up truck
- Presentation made at finish line and again at Nome banquet

## **GCI Dorothy G Page Halfway Award**

- Presented by GCI since 1994 in honor of the late Dorothy G Page, the “Mother of the Iditarod”
- Presented at the halfway checkpoint, Iditarod in odd numbered years and Cripple in even numbered years
- First musher to the checkpoint receives a trophy and \$3,000 in gold nuggets
- Presentation made at the checkpoint and again at Nome banquet

## **Winner’s Purse Award**

- Awarded at the finish line and again at the Awards Banquet in Nome

## **Wells Fargo Gold Coast Award**

- Presented by Wells Fargo since 1993 to the first musher to the “Gold Coast” community of Unalakleet
- Musher receives a beautiful trophy and \$2,500 worth of gold nuggets
- Presentation made at checkpoint and again at Awards Banquet in Nome

## **Wells Fargo Red Lantern Award**

- Presented by Wells Fargo Bank since 1993 to the last musher to finish Race
- Musher receives a trophy made from a red lantern
- Presentation made on the street as musher comes to finish line and again at the Red Lantern banquet

## **Leonhard Seppala Humanitarian Award**

- Presented since 1982 to a top 20 team
- Based on specific criteria to determine who has best demonstrated outstanding dog care throughout the race while remaining competitive. Recipient receives a lead crystal cup on an illuminated wooden base

## **Fred Meyer Sportsmanship Award**

- Presented by Fred Meyer since 2002
- Recipient chosen by fellow mushers
- Musher receives an engraved trophy and a \$500 Fred Meyer gift certificate
- Presented at the Nome banquet

## **Horizon Lines Most Improved Musher Award**

- Honors the musher who has bettered his/her last previous finish by the most number of places
- Winner receives an engraved trophy plus \$2,000
- Presented at Nome banquet

## **Millennium Hotel First Musher to the Yukon Award**

- Presented by the Millennium Hotel Anchorage since 1987
- Presented at the Anvik checkpoint in odd numbered years and at the Ruby checkpoint in even numbered years
- Musher receives a seven course dinner cooked on a Coleman stove by staff from the hotel and \$5,000 in one dollar bills as the “after dinner mint”
- Musher gets to enjoy this same seven course dinner for 2 at the Millennium Hotel anytime the musher chooses
- Presented at the checkpoint and again at the Nome banquet

### **PenAir Spirit of Alaska Award**

- Presented since 2000 to the first musher into McGrath
- Musher receives an original “Spirit Mask,” specially created for this event by Bristol Bay artist, Orville Lind, and a \$500 credit on PenAir towards travel or freight shipments
- Presented at the McGrath checkpoint and again at the Nome banquet

### **Nome Kennel Club Fastest Time From Safety to Nome Award**

- Presented by the Nome Kennel Club since 1973
- Winner must be in top 20
- Musher receives \$500
- Presented at the Nome banquet

### **Rookie of the Year Award**

- Presented since 1980 to the top place rookie (defined as a musher who has never before started the Race) by Clara Austin (wife of Jerry Austin) and Family of St. Michael
- Musher receives check for \$1,500 and trophy
- Presented at the Nome banquet

### **City of Nome Lolly Medley Memorial Golden Harness Award**

- Originally presented by the late Lolly Medley, Wasilla harness maker and one of two women to run the second Iditarod in 1974
- Embroidered gold colored harness
- Goes to an outstanding led dog, chosen by the mushers
- Presented at the Nome banquet

### **Golden Clipboard Award**

- Presented by the mushers since 2000 to a special checkpoint
- Voted on by the mushers
- Presented at the Nome banquet

### **Golden Stethoscope Award**

- Presented by the Iditarod Official Finishers Club (IOFC) to the veterinarian whom they feel was the most helpful on the trail
- Recipient chosen by the mushers
- Recipient receives an appropriate plaque
- Presented at the Nome banquet

### **Northern Air Cargo Herbie Nayokpuk Memorial Award**

- Presented to the musher chosen by staff and officials as the person who most closely mimics “**Herbie: The Shismaref Cannon Ball**” in his/her attitude on the trail
- Recipient receives free freight allotment on Northern Air Cargo and a walrus ivory scrimshawed trophy, plus \$1,049 in “pocket change” inside of a NAC jacket
- Presented at the Nome banquet

### **Northern Air Cargo 4 Wheeler Award**

- A new 4 Wheeler will be given to a musher who has finished the race, and whose key, which is chosen randomly by the mushers, starts the 4 wheeler as they approach the Awards stage.
- Presented at the Nome Banquet

# CHECKPOINTS

**Anchorage** Lat 61.12 Long 149.55

- Population, 260-283 (Alaska's largest city)
- Full range of transportation and accommodations
- Race starts downtown on Fourth Avenue and D Streets
- Lots of interesting side trips (check in the Visitor's Guide)

**Anvik** Lat 62.39 Long 160.11

- First checkpoint on the Yukon River
- Checkpoint in lodge -- minimum accommodations available
- Millennium Alaska Hotel First Musher to the Yukon Award (including a 7 course meal and \$5,00 in \$1 bills)

**Elim** (EE-lum) Lat 64.37 Long 162.15

- Population 313
- Checkpoint at the local fire hall

**Eagle Island** Lat 63.39 Long 159.24

- Tent checkpoint on the Yukon

**Finger Lake** Lat 61.59 Long 152.40

- Population 2
- Not uncommon to have 10 feet of snow on the ground
- Tent checkpoint on the lake

**Golovin** (GULL-uh-vin) Lat 64.32 Long 163.50

- Population 127
- Checkpoint located at checker's house

**Grayling** Lat 62.55 Long 160.40

- Population 208
- Checkpoint in community center
- Last village until Kaltag, 130 mile further up the trail

**Iditarod** (I-DIT-a-rod) Lat 62.38 Long 155.05

- Population 0
- GCI Dorothy G Page Halfway Award is presented to the first musher to the checkpoint receives a trophy and \$3,000 in gold nuggets

**Kaltag** (KAL-tag) Lat 64.19 Long 158.45

- Population 230
- Relief from driving Yukon River winds the mushers have been traveling through
- Official checkpoint and gathering spot is at the community hall
- Home of Virginia Kalland, widow of 1925 serum musher, Edgar Kalland

**Koyuk** (COY-uk) Lat 64.56 Long 161.10

- Population 297
- Checkpoint located at the City Office Building

**McGrath** Lat 62.57 Long 155.36

- Population 401
- Located near the confluence of the Kuskokwim and Takotna Rivers
- Last chance to buy aviation gas, except for Galena, until you reach Unalakleet
- Some lodging available
- PenAir award present here
- Checkpoint located at the Cap'n Snow Center (Community Hall)

**Nikolai** (NIK-o-lye) Lat 63.02 Long 154.22

- Population 109
- First of many Native villages along the trail
- Limited lodging available
- Checkpoint located in the Community Hall

**Nome** Lat 64.30 Long 165.24

- Population 3505
- End of the Iditarod Trail
- When gold was discovered on the beaches, it became a boomtown, home of 30,000 gold seekers
- Gold rush atmosphere still abounds when "Iditarod fever" hits town and the city welcomes visitors to see the end of the Race
- Numerous restaurants, gift shops and bars line famous Front Street, but lodging is limited
- Check with Nome Convention and Visitors Bureau for availability of B & B accommodations

**Ophir** (OH-fur) Lat 63.08 Long 156.31

- Population 0
- Now a ghost town, named for the lost country of Ophir, the source of King Solomon's gold
- Many items and artifacts still remain untouched
- Checkpoint is at the Forsgren cabin

**Rainy Pass** Lat 62.10 Long 152.43

- Population 2
- Located on Puntilla Lake and the highest point of the Iditarod Trail
- Steve Parrin's and Bucky Winkley's guiding operation working from here
- Checkpoint is in one of the cabins that are Rainy Pass Lodge

**Rohn** (RONE) Lat 62.35 Long 153.21

- Population 0
- Located near the confluence of the South Fork of the Kuskokwim and that Tatina Rivers
- Area served as location for one of the original Iditarod Trail Roadhouses used by dog teams carrying mail

**Safety** Lat 64.27 Long 164.49

- \* Population
- \* Checkpoint is the Safety Roadhouse, which opens up during Iditarod time
- \* Last checkpoint before Nome

**Shageluk** (SHAG-a-luck) Lat 62.42 Long 159.24

- Population 139
- Ingalik Indian name meaning “village of the dog people”
- Checkpoint in community hall
- Adolph Hamilton, resides here. He helped race organizers find the original trail to the town of Iditarod even though he had been over it once, as a small boy, with his father

**Shaktoolik** (Shak-TOO-lick) Lat 64.20 Long 161.10

- Population 230
- One of the windiest stretches of trail.
- Checkpoint is in the armory

**Skwentna** Lat 61.55 Long 151.11

- Population 111
- Located near the confluence of the Skwentna and Yentna Rivers
- Checkpoint located at Joe and Norma Delia’s log house
- Store there and limited lodging nearby

**Takotna** (Ta-COT-na) Lat 63.00 Long 156.04

- Population 38
- Situated on the banks of the Takotna River, this town as a store and restaurant
- One of the smallest towns with one of the biggest welcomes

**Unalakleet** (YOU-na-la-kleet) Lat 63.53 Long 160.42

- Population 747
- Located on the coast of Norton Sound, north of the Unalakleet River
- Largest community on the Iditarod Trail between Anchorage and Nome
- Stores, restaurants and limited lodging available
- Checkpoint at the Bingo Hall
- Wells Fargo award presented here

**White Mountain** Lat 64.41 Long 163.24

- Population 203
- Located on the Fish River
- Checkpoint located at the City Office Building
- Musher’s have mandatory 8 hour layover here

**Willow** Lat 61.45.25N Long 150.03.10W

- Population 1,658
- Restart location on Willow Lake at Mile

**Yentna Station Roadhouse** (YENT-na) Lat 61.46N Long 150.41W

- Population 8
- Checkpoint at the home of the Gabryszak family

The race route goes from Anchorage to Nome and crosses two mountain ranges, including North America’s largest mountain range, the Alaska Range. It runs along Yukon River and over the frozen Norton Sound and into Nome, Alaska

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE IDITAROD TRAIL (Between checkpoints)**

### **Willow to the Yentna River**

The trail begins on Willow Lake and winds through typical northern forests, consisting of alternating birch woods and spruce swamps. Most of the trail is flat to gently rolling hills. Most of the hills are around the Susitna River. The Yentna Station Checkpoint is located at the confluence of the Susitna and Yentna Rivers.

### **Yentna to Skwentna**

After crossing the rough ice on the Susitna near the confluence with the Yentna River, the ice normally smoothes out on the slower flowing smaller Yentna. The mushers run the Yentna all the way to the confluence with the Skwentna River and the town of Skwentna, three miles from the mouth. These slow moving glacial rivers normally provide very good trails. They are all from one fourth to more than a mile wide and freeze thick enough to provide a good trail until late into the winter. Hazards are sometimes plentiful with rough ice to manhandle a sled over and around. Overflow, water running on top of the ice, can be a very real problem in some conditions.

### **Skwentna to Finger Lake**

From the Skwentna checkpoint the trail continues up the river for one mile and turns off on the left bank. It continues inland across Eight-Mile Swamp through spruce timber and cottonwoods back to the river and cross the river to the Old Skwentna Roadhouse. The crossing is at a 45-degree angle to the river. The trail climbs up a creek drainage turning first right and then left into an open swamp, long and narrow, and through spruce forest for two to two and a half miles to Shell Creek. Overflow and/or open water is often a problem. From Shell Creek the trail continues, crossing One Stone Lake. From there to Finger Lake are open swamps and thin stands of spruce and alder. The trail crosses to the north shore and the Finger Lake cabin. All grades are moderate or gently with no hard climbs and no dense woods.

### **Finger Lake to Puntilla Lake (Rainy Pass Lodge)**

At Finger Lake the trail drops sharply onto Red Lake leaving the lake at the northwest corner. It climbs steeply up a small creek bed to the benches above Finger Lake. From here it is through swamps, spruce and alder forest to Happy River. The two miles before Happy River are through dense spruce. At Happy River there are three benches to descend with the first being the longest drop. A small drainage leads down to the level bench and the trail drops straight down this "V." From this bench the trail descends off the right end to the bench along the river. The last drop is onto the river itself. This section is one of the most hazardous on the trail and extreme caution must be exercised here. The trail will be well marked and the descents will have a straight lead-in. Once on the river itself, the trail turns left to the mount (200') and then right, going up the Skwentna River. Approximately one fourth mile up the Skwentna is a draw coming down from the right and the trail goes up this draw. The draw is only 135 – 150 yards long and once on top the trail continues northwest to Shirley Lake, passing through spruce and cottonwood and rolling hills. No grades are steep or long. The steepest grade is up the draw from the Skwentna River. The trail exits Shirley Lake on the northwest side and continues through spruce and cottonwood to Round Mountain. There are some moderate but short grades and a couple of steep but short grades both up and down. At Round Mountain a side hill is encountered and brush is encroaching on the trail. From here to Puntilla Lake is a distance of three to four miles and is gently terrain with open swamps and sparse lumber.

### **Puntilla Lake to Rohn**

Puntilla Lake (Rainy Pass Lodge) is 1835' above sea level, and from here the trail climbs through Rainy Pass reaching 3160' above sea level. From the lodge the trail climbs a small hill and enters the valley. It runs on the north side of the ridge that separates the Indian creek drainage from Happy River drainage. The trail gradually crosses to the right side of the valley and where Happy River forks three ways, follows Pass Creek (the right fork) into Rainy Pass itself. The climb this far is gentle, but the terrain is barren with a few willow thickets, and the snow is wind packed to ice and very rough. Once across Rainy Pass (Puntilla Lake), the trail climbs to the summit then starts down a steep descent along Dalzell Creek. Dalzell Creek runs to the Tatina River, and here the trail turns sharply left and continues five to six miles to the Rohn checkpoint.



### **Rohn to Farewell Lake (Farewell Lake is not a checkpoint)**

The trail leaves Rohn and crosses the South Fork of the Kuskokwim River and turns sharply left (inland) about ¾ mile below the Rohn checkpoint. From here to Farewell Lake, the trail crosses sharp hills with moderate and steep grades, both up and down. Some of the grades are up to one half to one and three fourths miles long. The trail is very narrow in places, and in some of the denser stands of spruces, the trail is like a tunnel. The worst area is the Tin Creek with a steep side hill drop to the canyon floor and a climb up the other side. This climb is to the right of the gorge (100-150 yards) and should be well marked. The trail from Tin Creek to Farewell Lake continues through spruce and alder. In the open areas the trail is but a rut when the snow is light. It crosses several "wallows" which re very rough. Approaching Farewell Lake, the terrain levels out somewhat and crosses a small lake a couple of miles prior to dropping onto Farewell. This is bison (buffalo) country!

**Note:** In 1965, eighteen bison (buffalo) were relocated to what is now known as the Farewell Burn of the Alaskan wilderness from Canada. This experiment proved successful enough that twenty more were added in 1968. The herd has been maintained at between 200 and 300 since 1972. Mushers have been astonished when taking a nap in this area to wake up to a buffalo kissing their cheek. The animals seem to be curious about the mushers and their teams, but to date have never caused a musher any problems.

### **Farewell Lake to Nikolai**

The trail leaves Farewell Lake at the northwest end of the lake, and for the next eight to 10 miles, it passes through dense spruce forest and across lakes. It then enters the old "Farewell Burn." In the summer of 1984, the B.L.M. cleared the trail through the Burn. It is 25' wide and was cleared to bare ground so there are no windfalls, and it is a good trail. The terrain is rolling with short moderate grades. This trail segment is approximately 20 miles long. Trail markings are the only visual references for direction. At the Salmon River, the trail turns to the right, crosses the Salmon River at the cabins and continues to Nikolai through spruce and alder stands and open swamps. It crosses the Kuskokwim River into Nikolai. The one danger area through the Burn is at Bear Creek, which has a history of being open. Bridges will be built, if needed, and the area will be well marked.

### **Nikolai to McGrath**

From Nikolai, the trail runs west to McGrath. The terrain is mostly flat. The trail passes through open swamps, small stands of spruce and alder and runs on the river itself. There are no grades to consider. This section is well traveled and should present no problems unless deep fresh snow is encountered, at which time the trail is very soft. McGrath is a major staging area and many trails run out of town. The Iditarod will be well marked to prevent confusion.

### **McGrath to Takotna**

The trail leaves McGrath at the east end of Runway Seven, the same place where it enters. Crossing the Kuskokwim River to the mouth of the Takotna River and turning west, the trail continues over Porcupine Ridge to Takotna. The terrain is gentle rolling hills with moderate grades and is mainly spruce with a few open areas. This is a well traveled trail and should present no problems.

### **Takotna to Ophir**

From Takotna, the Iditarod trail is the State highway that runs to Ophir. Take the road to the right at the fork one and one half miles out of Takotna. Normally there is no snow plowing on the Ophir fork of the highway; however, it is well traveled by dog teams and snow machines all winter. It is seven miles to the top of the grade and then runs down into the Innoko River Valley. Bridges and streams are identified with State of Alaska signs. The trail leaves the road occasionally to cross ridges and to avoid drifted areas. These departures should be well marked.

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## **SOUTHERN ROUTE (Odd years, 2011, 2013, 2015...)**

### **Ophir to Iditarod**

Out of Ophir checkpoint the trail follows a cat trail along the Innoko River into the old town site, about a mile. It runs right down the airport runway and crosses the Innoko about a mile further along. You cross the river again at six miles out of the checkpoint. Large spruce, birch and cottonwood here - a good camping spot. Immediately after crossing the Innoko, the cat trail forks -left to Iditarod. It will be well marked. A long up grade through black spruce to the Beaver Mountain Pass across a barren rocky, desolate area. Two small creeks cross this stretch offering the only meager cover available. The trail is heading in a West - Southwest direction. Six to eight miles after re-entering spruce cover; you pass Don's Cabin on the right side of the trail. You are 36 miles from Ophir. The trail crosses a small spruce covered ridge and crosses Windy Creek. The trail runs south on the East side of the Iditarod through open timber, swamps, and lakes into Iditarod. Some gentle rolling ridges are encountered. The checkpoint is on the west side of the large slough with old town on the left.

### **Iditarod to Shageluk**

You leave Iditarod out of the west end of the slough and drop onto the river for about two miles north and then go up the left bank following a low ridge between two small streams climbing a gentle often moderate grade to nearly the top of a 1008 ft barren knob. This portion of trail is in an old burn; it will be marked with tripods, reflectors, and tape. It passes across ridge after ridge with gentle to occasionally steep grades. The Little Yentna crossing is the first stream of any size since Iditarod. You continue through swamp and scattered timber to the Big Yentna out of small drainages in a westerly direction. It crosses a few low ridges with gentle grades while changing drainages. Spruce covered hills are encountered as you drop into the lower Innoko River Valley at Shageluk

### **Shageluk to Anvik**

Leaving Shageluk, you drop onto the Innoko and go north about a mile. Depart the river on the left bank and proceed in a westerly direction across swamps and lake for 10 - 11 miles. The trail turns to a more southwesterly direction and passes through heavy timber, cottonwood, spruce, birch and lots of brush. It is nearly a tunnel in some spots. You come out on the Yukon and pass an island on your right. Across the Yukon and 3/4 miles north is Anvik. It is on a small slough just off the river.

### **Anvik to Grayling**

The trail goes north along the west shore of the Yukon out of Anvik for miles to Grayling.

### **Grayling to Eagle Island**

Out of Grayling you travel north along the west shore of the Yukon. Occasionally the trail may run on an island sandbar to avoid thin river ice. Local conditions will control this. The Iditarod trail will have confirming marking just after intersections or turnoffs. It is located just inside a small stream on the west bank.

### **Eagle Island to Kaltag**

Out of Eagle Island the trail continues to hug the west shore for about 23 miles and then crosses to some midstream islands and then to the east shore at 35 mile Slough. We follow the trapper's trail north on up the Yukon to Kaltag.

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## **NORTERN ROUTE: (Even years: 2012, 2014, 2016...)**

### **Ophir to Cripple**

Out of the Ophir checkpoint, the trail follows a cat trail along the Innoko River into the old village site about a mile further along. It crosses the river again six miles out of the checkpoint. From the crossing, the trail heads northeast. The terrain is flat, with sparse scrub spruce and a few rolling hills as it approaches Cripple.

### **Cripple to Sulatna Crossing to Ruby**

Leaving Cripple, the country stays the same for 15 to 20 miles. Then the trees get larger and thicker and the rolling hills are larger. At Bear Creek, the trail enters a cat trail that should be easy to follow. At Sulatna Crossing (steel bridge), most of the mushers stop to rest and feed their dogs. (Sulatna Crossing is not a checkpoint.) There is a small lake on the left. Immediately after the bridge, the trailbreakers will punch out 15 to 20 parking spots for dog teams. The trail follows this road all the way to the Ruby Hills. There are many long grades and much side hill to travel.

### **Ruby to Galena, Nulato and Kaltag**

From Ruby, the next 150 miles is on the Yukon River, passing through Galena and Nulato. In most years, the local traffic keeps the river trail hard and fast. This section is well marked because wind and snow can cover the trail very quickly.

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### **Kaltag to Unalakleet-**

From Kaltag, the trail exits from the northwest end of the runway. The next 15 miles run through spruce forest and open areas along the Kaltag River, climbing gently to the summit of the Portage. Continuing through similar terrain, it starts down the Unalakleet drainage to Old Woman Cabin at the base of Old Woman Mountain. This mountain is an excellent landmark. The trail continues past the mountain and runs along the left side of the Unalakleet drainage. The terrain is gentle rolling hills. Little or no vegetation can be seen along the trail until near Unalakleet. Approximately five miles out of town, the trail hits the river. With the exception of a few short portages across horseshoe bends, the trail follows the river into Unalakleet. The last 32 miles (from Old Woman Mountain) is often windy, and the snow is usually wind packed and crusty. In fact, the entire coast is often very windy.

### **Unalakleet to Shaktoolik**

The trail to Shaktoolik crosses several low ridges with mostly gentle and moderate grades. The vegetation is stunted spruce and willow thickets. Leaving Unalakleet, the trail turns northward and parallels the coast to Power, then turns inland, crossing behind Blueberry Point. It then drops back toward the coast at Egavik, a summer fish camp. A series of long low hills is crossed with grades being moderate to gentle but some are up to a mile long. The crest of the last ridge is about 17 miles from Shaktoolik, and the village is visible from here. The next four to five miles are down a moderate to steep serpentine grade through willow thickets and stunted spruce. The turns are moderate but can be extremely slick. At the bottom, the trail follows the coastal dune on the landward side the last 12 miles to Shaktoolik. The trail from the bottom of the hill to the checkpoint runs over ice on the Shaktoolik River and is often rough. The village is on the left.

### **Shaktoolik to Koyuk**

The trail from Shaktoolik bears north, crossing the peninsula. It runs on land for eight to nine miles then starts across Norton Bay at the mouth of Reindeer Cove. The terrain to this point is mostly gentle swells of ground with no true grades. There is no vegetation. Approximately five miles onto the ice is Island Point and Little Mountain. It appears to be a large rock rising from the sea ice, but is in fact the head of a small peninsula. The trail passes a shelter cabin on the south side of Little Mountain. From here, a compass bearing of 240 degrees leads into Koyuk. Marking on this segment of the trail usually consists of laths with reflective tape alternating with spruce boughs. Every mile will be marked. The ice is often tough.

### **Koyuk to Elim**

When leaving Koyuk for Elim, the trail follows the coast, almost doubling back on itself. It runs southeast to Bald Head and Castle Rock where it turns westerly, following the coast to Moses Point. Moses Point is a spit that, with the coastline, forms Kwiniuk Inlet. The trail parallel the spit for five to six miles where it joins the mainland. It continues on the sea ice along the coast, passing the abandoned F.A.A. Station. From there to Elim, two routes may be used. One continues along the ice to Elim; the other takes the road along the coast to Elim, which is six to eight miles away.

**Elim to White Mountain**

The trail leaves Elim, following the ice along the coast for ten to eleven miles to a cabin just north-northeast of the limestone cliffs, and here it turns right (inland) and crosses the Kwiktalik Mountains. This range is a low series of hills (1,000 to 1,500 feet) with moderate grades. Vegetation ranges from small spruce to barren ground. Some of the grades are as long as a mile but none are excessively steep. The barren sections are often wind blown and icy. The last descent to Golovin Bay is long and sometimes runs side hill. At the shelter cabin on the coast, the trail turns sharply right and crosses the ice to Golovin. The village is located on a spit and easily seen. (Counting the cabin below Elim where the trail leaves the ice, there are three shelter cabins on the trail, one of them being nine miles from the coast where the trail intersects McKinley Creek.) From Golovin the trail crosses the ice on Golovin Lagoon to Mudyutok River and goes up this river to the Fish River and then to White Mountain. This section is short, easy travel, unless a strong wind is blowing down the rivers, and then it can be difficult going.

**White Mountain to Safety**

The trail from White Mountain continues up the Fish River for another two to two and a half miles to a large island. It makes a sharp left turn and starts overland. Then at Topkok, the trail turns sharply right along the coast. The Nome Kennel Club has a shelter cabin at the bottom of Topkok Hill. From here to Safety Roadhouse, the trail is the road.

**Safety to Nome**

From Safety Roadhouse to Nome the trail runs along the Nome-Solomon Road except where it passes over Cape Nome, and the last seven miles into Nome. Here the trail parallels the road on the right side and presents no obstacles.

\*This information comes from Iditarod's website and media guide. (2010, 2011, 2012)

# Healthy Sled Dogs

Maintaining healthy sled dogs is priority.

Dr. Stuart Nelson, Jr. is the Chief Veterinarian for the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

Each year, volunteer veterinarians from all over the world become a part of the Iditarod Veterinarian Team.

To be chosen as a member of the team, the veterinarians must meet standards and criteria including being able to speak English, having experience with sled dogs, and having experience with small animal veterinarian medicine and surgery. The veterinarians also have to be in good health and able to withstand the working conditions of the arctic.

Veterinarians are involved in the prerace health screenings, too. More than 10, 000 examinations are given during the race by the team. The standards are high when it comes to dog care before, during, and after the Iditarod!

During the race, veterinarians are situated at the checkpoints. As dog teams arrive in each checkpoint, the musher provides the vet team with the 'vet book', a small notebook that contains information about the dogs on the team. Veterinarians examine the dogs quickly if the musher is leaving the checkpoint or more extensively if the musher is staying in a checkpoint. Veterinarians ask the musher questions about the dogs and make notations in the vet book to indicate information for the next checkpoint and veterinarians to read. Veterinarians must sign the 'vet book' before the musher leaves and the 'vet book' is part of the mandatory gear a musher carries.

When a decision is made for a dog to not continue in the race, the dog is called a 'dropped dog', meaning the dog is 'dropped' from the race. The dropped dog is left at the checkpoint and is under the direct care of the veterinarian team until it is flown out of the checkpoint.

The majority of 'dropped dogs' are pulled from the race due to minor issues such as but not limited to: the dog being in season and therefore, a distraction to other dogs on the team, sprained or strained wrists or limping, or minor ailments. The vast majority of symptoms are gone and unrecognizable within a few days.

The number of dogs dropped from the race is an indicator for the concern and priority of excellent dog care. Everyone wants healthy dogs before, during, and after the race.

## From Iditarod's Website and Dr. Nelson:

### Iditarod Dog Care Measures

*by Stuart Nelson, Jr., DVM*

#### ***Musher Entry Requirements***

- Completion of qualifying races approved by the Iditarod Trail Committee.
- Review of performance by Iditarod Race Officials.

#### ***Veterinarian Selection***

- 5 years minimum clinical practice experience.
- Previous experience working with racing sled dogs.
- Ability to work with others as a team.
- Fluency in English - some foreign veterinarians are very capable, but language barriers create difficulties.
- Membership in the ISDVMA (International Sled Dog Veterinary Medical Association) is strongly encouraged.
- Staff of approximately 35 veterinarians - an average of 5 rookies annually.
- Staff selected by September of previous year to allow for preparation.

#### ***Preparation of Veterinarians***

- Rookies must attend ISDVMA Sled Dog Veterinarian Training Seminar.
- Informational letters from the Chief Veterinarian and staff interaction on topics of concern.
- General veterinary staff meeting prior to the race.

#### ***Preparation of Musher***

- Informational letters from Chief Veterinarian regarding topics of concern and dog care issues.
- Iditarod Rules and Policies regarding dog care and management.
- Membership in Mush with P.R.I.D.E.
  - Kennel management guidelines.
  - General dog care guidelines.
- Kennel visit (optional) by an ITC veterinarian.
- Two Day Rookie Orientation in December.
- General musher meeting prior to race.

#### ***Preparation of Dogs***

- Identification requirements (micro-chipping performed by ITC).
- Vaccination requirements (documentation of current vaccinations is reviewed by veterinarians performing the pre-race exams).
- De-worming requirements within 10 days of the race start (medication provided through the ITC).
- Pre-race veterinary physical exams within 14 days of the race start.
- Pre-race ECG's (provided through the ITC - performed within 30 days of the start).

- Pre-race blood work (CBC's and Chemistry panels provided through the ITC - samples are taken at the same time the ECG's are performed).
- Dog Care Agreement Forms must be completed by each musher prior to the race. These documents list the name of a veterinarian of the mushers choice who will be responsible for providing any necessary follow-up medical or surgical treatments of dogs released from the care of the Iditarod Trail Committee.

### ***Dog Care During the Race***

- Our goal is to have a veterinary examination of every dog at every checkpoint.
- Dog care diaries must be carried by the mushers and presented to veterinarians at each checkpoint. They serve as written medical records for each dog in the race.
- Dropped dog care and management is highly organized to provide for the safe return of the dogs to Anchorage.
- Random drug testing as a precautionary effort.
- Necropsy protocols are strict and detailed.
  - Determine cause of death
  - Enables us to learn more about abnormalities that may cause death
  - Research aspect
- Extensive Inventory of veterinary supplies and medications to allow for treatment of potential health abnormalities that could develop in any large number of animals over a three week period of time.

### ***Post-Race Dog Care***

- Similar to dropped dog care.

### ***Research***

- To learn more about medical conditions affecting dogs.
- ECG program (heart research).
- CBC's and Chemistry Screens (database of normal values for sled dogs).
- Vitamin E and muscle function.
- Diarrhea in marathon athletes.
- Gastric endoscopy.

# Mushing Vocabulary

**ATV:** All terrain vehicle used for travel or trail breaking.

**Bibs:** Garment worn at the start and finish of the race to identify each musher by the starting order.

**Big Su:** Refers to the Big Susitna River.

**Boonies:** A non-rural or urban area, generally an area where no one lives.

**Booties:** A type of sock that is made to protect the dog's feet from small cuts and sores. These are made out of various materials and the newest materials are designed for comfort and to be more long lasting.

**Burled Arch:** The finish line in Nome is marked by this arch.

**Bush:** Remote areas of the interior of Alaska.

**By-Pass Mail:** Service provided by US Mail System for remote villages to get mail and goods delivered. By-Pass Mail has been used to ship everything from toilet paper to refrigerators.

**Checkpoint:** Identified places along the race trail designated as official stops for mushers to sign in, have dogs examined by veterinarians, and collect supplies.

**Come Gee! Come Haw!** Voice commands for 180 degree turns in either direction.

**Dog in Basket:** Tired or injured dog carried in the sled

**Double Lead:** Two dogs who lead the team side by side.

**Dropped Dog:** A dog that dropped from his team at a checkpoint is considered to be a dropped dog. The dog is cared for at the checkpoint by the veterinarian team until it is flown back to Anchorage to the musher's handlers.

**Dropped Bags:** Supply bags sent to checkpoints, some contain musher supplies such as extra clothing or batteries. Some contain supplies for the dogs, such as food, dog booties, or essential equipment.

**Gee:** Voice command for right turn.

**Haw:** Voice command for left turn.

**Heet:** Alcohol based fuel used by mushers in their cook stoves on the trail.

**Husky:** Any northern type dog.

**Iditarod Air Force (IAF)** The team of volunteer pilots that fly supplies before, during, and after the race. They transport necessary goods and supplies, people, and dogs.

**Last Frontier:** Alaska's State motto. Alaska was the last frontier in the United States

**Lead Dog or Leader:** Dog who runs in front of others dogs.

**Line Out!** Command to lead dog to pull the team out straight from the sled.

**Malamute:** Term often used by old timers for any sled dog. Larger husky

**Mush! Hike! All Right! Let's Go!** Commands to start the team (Mush is rarely used in the mushing world.)

**Neck Line:** Line that connects dog's collar to tow line and between the two collars of a double lead.



**On by:** Command signaling team to keep moving forward and not be distracted by whatever the team is going by at the time.

**Outside:** Any place in the lower 48 states.

**Overflow:** When the ice gets so thick that the water has nowhere to go, it pushes up and over the ice. This overflow often gets a thin layer of ice when the temperature drops making it dangerous to cross.

**Pacing:** Leading a team with some sort of motorized vehicle that can set the 'pace' at a specific speed.

**Pedaling:** Pushing the sled with one foot while the other remains on the runner

**Red Lantern:** The musher who is running in last place. The Red Lantern award is given to the last musher to reach Nome.

**Rigging:** A collection of lines to which dogs are attached. Includes tow line, tug lines and neck lines

**Rookie:** A musher who is running the race for the first time or who has never completed the race.

**Runners:** The two bottom pieces of the sled which come in contact with the snow. They extend back of the basket for the driver to stand on. Runner bottoms are usually wood, covered with plastic or Teflon. This plastic or Teflon is usually replaced at least once during the race.

**Siberian Husky:** Medium sized (average 50 pounds) northern breed of dog, recognized by the American Kennel Club. Siberians usually have blue eyes.

**Slats:** Thin strips of wood which make up the bottom of a wooden sled basket. Note: Toboggan sleds have a sheet of plastic as the bottom for their basket

**Snow Hook or Ice Hook:** Heavy piece of metal attached to sled by line. The snow hook is embedded in the snow in order to hold the team and sled for a short period of time.

**Snowmachine:** Another name for a snowmobile.

**Snub Line:** Rope attached to the sled which is used to tie the sled to a tree or other object.

**Stake:** Metal or wooden post driven into the ground to which dog is tied

**Straight:** The voice command given to a dog team to signal the team continue straight and not turn on a different trail.

**Swing Dog or Dogs:** Dog that runs directly behind the leader. Further identified as right or left swing depending on which side of the tow line he is positioned on. His job is to help "swing" the team in the turns or curves.

**Team Dog:** Any dog other than those described above.

**Tether Line:** A long chain with shorter pieces of chain extending from it. Used to stake out a team when stakes aren't available.

**Toggles:** Small pieces of ivory or wood used by Eskimos to fasten tug lines to harnesses

**Trail!** A request for right-of-way on the trail.

**Trail Breakers:** The team of volunteers that are on snowmachines (snowmobiles) that stay in front of the race to break trail and put trail markers out for the mushers.

**Trail Sweeps:** The team of volunteers that are on snowmachine (snowmobiles) that are at the end of the race keeping track of the trail and mushers.

**Tug Line:** Line that connects dog's harness to the tow line.

**Wheel Dogs or Wheelers:** Dogs placed directly in front of the sled. Their job is to pull the sled out and around corners or trees.

**Whoa!** Command used to halt the team, accompanied by heavy pressure on the brake.

\*Resource: Iditarod website

# Important Information

## **Iditarod: What does it mean? (From Iditarod's website: Learn About section.)**

The word Iditarod means clear water and was named by the Shageluk Indians for the Iditarod River.

The word comes from the Ingalik Indian word HalIditarod which was the name for the river on which the town was built. It means distant place.

James Kari, Assistant Professor, University of Alaska Native Language Center in 1979:

The name Iditarod came from an Ingalik and Holikachuk word hidedhod for the Iditarod River. This name means distant or distant place. This word is still known by elders in the villages of Shageluk, Anvik, Grayling and Holy Cross.

**Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race: Check the on line media guide for facts and information pertaining to the current race.**

**Miles from Checkpoint to Checkpoint:**  
**Estimation of miles between checkpoints is found on the [www.iditarod.com](http://www.iditarod.com) website at the About Iditarod section.**

## **Iditarod links to important information:**

- Official website for race information: [www.iditarod.com](http://www.iditarod.com)

# Southern Route

Checkpoints	Distance between Checkpoints*	Distance from Anchorage	Distance to Nome
<b>Total Distance</b>			998
<a href="#">Anchorage to Campbell Airstrip</a>	11	11	987
<a href="#">Willow to Yentna Station</a>	42	53	945
<a href="#">Yentna Station to Skwentna</a>	30	83	915
<a href="#">Skwentna to Finger Lake</a>	40	123	875
<a href="#">Finger Lake to Rainy Pass</a>	30	153	845
<a href="#">Rainy Pass to Rohn</a>	35	188	810
<a href="#">Rohn to Nikolai</a>	75	263	735
<a href="#">Nikolai to McGrath</a>	48	311	687
<a href="#">McGrath to Takotna</a>	18	329	669
<a href="#">Takotna to Ophir</a>	23	352	646
<a href="#">Ophir to Iditarod</a>	80	432	566
<a href="#">Iditarod to Shageluk</a>	55	487	511
<a href="#">Shageluk to Anvik</a>	25	512	486
<a href="#">Anvik to Grayling</a>	18	530	468
<a href="#">Grayling to Eagle Island</a>	62	592	406
<a href="#">Eagle Island to Kaltag</a>	60	652	346
<a href="#">Kaltag to Unalakleet</a>	85	737	261
<a href="#">Unalakleet to Shaktoolik</a>	40	777	221
<a href="#">Shaktoolik to Koyuk</a>	50	827	171
<a href="#">Koyuk to Elim</a>	48	875	123
<a href="#">Elim to Golovin</a>	28	903	95
<a href="#">Golovin to White Mountain</a>	18	921	77
<a href="#">White Mountain to Safety</a>	55	976	22
<a href="#">Safety to Nome</a>	22	998	0

# Northern Route

Checkpoints	Distance between Checkpoints*	Distance from Anchorage	Distance to Nome
	<b>Total Distance</b>		975
<a href="#">Anchorage to Campbell Airstrip</a>	11	11	964
<a href="#">Willow to Yentna Station</a>	42	53	922
<a href="#">Yentna Station to Skwentna</a>	30	83	892
<a href="#">Skwentna to Finger Lake</a>	40	123	852
<a href="#">Finger Lake to Rainy Pass</a>	30	153	822
<a href="#">Rainy Pass to Rohn</a>	35	188	787
<a href="#">Rohn to Nikolai</a>	75	263	712
<a href="#">Nikolai to McGrath</a>	48	311	664
<a href="#">McGrath to Takotna</a>	18	329	646
<a href="#">Takotna to Ophir</a>	23	352	623
<a href="#">Ophir to Cripple</a>	73	425	550
<a href="#">Cripple to Ruby</a>	70	495	480
<a href="#">Ruby to Galena</a>	50	545	430
<a href="#">Galena to Nulato</a>	37	582	393
<a href="#">Nulato to Kaltag</a>	47	629	346
<a href="#">Kaltag to Unalakleet</a>	85	714	261
<a href="#">Unalakleet to Shaktoolik</a>	40	754	221
<a href="#">Shaktoolik to Koyuk</a>	50	804	171
<a href="#">Koyuk to Elim</a>	48	852	123
<a href="#">Elim to Golovin</a>	28	880	95
<a href="#">Golovin to White Mountain</a>	18	898	77
<a href="#">White Mountain to Safety</a>	55	953	22
<a href="#">Safety to Nome</a>	22	975	0
Total Distance			975

# The Official Map of the IDITAROD

NORTHERN ROUTE (Even Years) / SOUTHERN ROUTE (Odd Years)

