

2013 CHECKPOINT DESCRIPTIONS

(Pronunciation, Population and Facts of Interest)

1. **Anchorage** (ang-ker-ij) – (ANC) Lat 61.12 Long 149.55 -- Population 296,197 makes it Alaska's largest city with a full range of transportation and hotel accommodations. The race starts downtown on Fourth Avenue. Interesting side trips during March include Portage Glacier or downhill skiing at Mt. Alyeska, both less than an hour's drive South, or head North to Hatcher Pass for cross country skiing and to explore the remains of Independence Mine.
2. **Willow** (wil-oh) – Lat 61.45.25N Long 150.03.10W Population 2,156 and is the where the restart takes place on Willow Lake at Parks Highway Mile Marker 70.
3. **Yentna Station** -- (YENT-na) -- (YENT) Lat 61.46 N Long 150.41W -- Population 8 .This checkpoint is at the home of the Dan & Jean Gabryzack family.
4. **Skwentna** (SKWENT-nuh) - (SKW) Lat 61.55 Long 151.11 -- Population 30 -- Located near the confluence of the Skwentna and Yentna Rivers. The checkpoint is located at Joe and Norma Delia's log house, also known as the Post Office. There is a store and limited lodging nearby.
5. **Finger Lake** -- (FL) Lat 61.59 Long 152.40 -- Population 2 -- In the heart of the snow country, here it is not uncommon to have 10 feet of snow on the ground. The checkpoint is at Winter Lake Lodge.
6. **Rainy Pass** -- (RP) Lat 62.10 Long 152.43 -- Population 2 -- This area represents the highest point on the Iditarod Trail as it passes over the majestic Alaska Range. Located on Puntilla Lake is Vern Humble's guiding operation. Known as Rainy Pass Lodge, it is closed down at this time of year. Iditarod uses one of their cabins for a checkpoint and another for mushers to rest in.
7. **Rohn** (RONE) -- (ROH) Lat 62.35 Long 153.21 -- Population 0 -- This area is tied with Rainy Pass as having the most spectacular scenery. The gateway to the interior, Rohn Roadhouse marks the transition point where the mushers start to venture into the flatlands of the interior, along with dropping temperatures. Situated near the confluence of the South Fork of the Kuskokwim and Tatina Rivers, the area served as one of the original Iditarod Trail Roadhouses for the dog teams carrying mail, etc. The actual roadhouse is gone, so the checkpoint is a cabin built in the 1930's. **Note:** Most press mistakenly refer to this as Rohn River checkpoint, but there is no Rohn River. It's Rohn Roadhouse. Many mushers take their mandatory 24-hour layover here, before heading across the bleak but treacherous Farewell Burn area. **No facilities or lodging are available at Rohn.**
8. **Nikolai** (NIK-o-lye) -- (NIK) Lat 63.02 Long 154.22 -- Population 101 -- This is the first of many Native villages along the Iditarod Trail. There is a village store at the far end of town across the airstrip, and limited lodging is available through advance booking. The checkpoint is located in the Community Hall.
9. **McGrath** (muh-GRATH) -- (McG) Lat 62.57 Long 155.36 -- Population 341-- Located near the confluence of the Kuskokwim and Takotna Rivers, this thriving community has two stores, a bar and a restaurant. It's the last chance to buy aviation gas, except for Galena, until you reach the coast at Unalakleet. Lodging is also available with advance booking.
10. **Takotna** (Ta-COT-na) -- (TAK) Lat 63.00 Long 156.04 -- Population 49 -- Situated on the banks of the Takotna River, this town has a store and restaurant. This is one of the smallest towns with one of the biggest welcomes.
11. **Ophir** (OH-fur) -- (OPH) Lat 63.08 Long 156.31 -- Population 0 -- Now a ghost town, it took its name in 1908 from a nearby placer creek, one of a dozen streams in Alaska to be named by Bible-reading prospectors, for the lost country of Ophir, the source of King Solomon's gold. Many items and artifacts still remain untouched. The checkpoint is at Dick and Audra Forsgren's cabin.
12. **Iditarod** (I-DIT-a-rod) - Lat 62.38 Long 155.05 - Population 0 – Now a ghost town – once a bustling community of over 10,000. GCI Dorothy G Page Halfway Award is presented to the first musher to the checkpoint receives a trophy and \$3,000 in gold nuggets.
13. **Shageluk** (SHAG-a-luck) - Lat 62.42 Long 159.24 - Population 83 - Ingalik Indian name meaning "village of the dog people." Checkpoint is 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.

14. **Anvik** (AN-vick) - Lat 62.39 Long 160.11 – Population 79 - First checkpoint on the Yukon River. Checkpoint is 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)
15. **Grayling** - Lat 62.55 Long 160.40 - Population 189 - Checkpoint is in community center and is the last village until Kaltag, 122 miles up the trail on the Yukon River.
16. **Eagle Island** - Lat 63.39 Long 159.24 – Population 0 - Tent checkpoint on the Yukon River.
17. **Kaltag** -- (KAL-tag) -- (KAL) Lat 64.19 Long 158.45 -- Population 205 -- This town signals a brief respite from the driving winds as the trail from here leads overland through Kaltag Portage to the coast of Norton Sound where the winds take on new meaning. Kaltag is the home of Virginia Kalland, widow of Edgar Kalland who was one of the original mushers who helped carry lifesaving diphtheria serum along this trail 60 years ago. She also owns one of Kaltag's three stores. **Note:** The location for mushers check-in is at Rich Burnham's house, but the official checkpoint and gathering spot is the community hall about a block away. Please don't treat the Burnham home as a checkpoint.
18. **Unalakleet** (YOU-na-la-kleet) -- (UNK) Lat 63.53 Long 160.42 -- Population 692 -- Situated on the coast of Norton Sound, just north of the Unalakleet River, this village is the largest community on the Iditarod Trail between Willow and Nome. Two well-stocked stores as well as two restaurants can be found here along with limited lodging by advance booking. The trail is now entering the gateway to the Bering Sea and from here on the mushers can expect sudden storms and an ample supply of wind. The checkpoint is in front of the A.C. store.
19. **Shaktoolik** (Shak-TOO-lick) -- (SHAK) Lat 64.20 Long 161.10 --Population 258 -- One look down the street at the snowdrifts will tell you this is one of the windiest stretches of the trail. From here the trail continues overland for a short distance, then leads the mushers out onto the ice of Norton Bay, one of the most treacherous segments of trail that the musher may have to contend with. The checkpoint is at the armory.
20. **Koyuk** (Koy-uk) -- (KOY) Lat 64.56 Long 161.10 --- Population 347 -- Once this checkpoint is reached, the mushers can breathe a sigh of relief as almost all of the rest of the trail is at least over land. The checkpoint is the City Rec Center.
21. **Elim** (EE-lim) -- (ELM) Lat 64.37 Long 162.15 -- Population 332 -- The checkpoint (at least at the time this went to press) is at the fire hall (check at the store for directions). From here the trail heads over the hills of the Kwiktalik Mountains inland a little ways to the next checkpoint on Golovin Bay. The checkpoint is at the fire hall. Ask at the village store.
22. **Golovin** (GULL-uh-vin) -- (GOL) Lat 64.32 Long 163.50 -- Population 171 – Not an official checkpoint, but a community with a large welcome. Golovin has one store. From here the trail heads across Golovin Bay, then overland to the next checkpoint.
23. **White Mountain** --(WT MT) Lat 64.41 Long 163.24 -- Population 199 -- Just 77 miles from Nome, this village is located on the banks of the Fish River. It takes its name from that of a picturesque nearby mountain. Checkpoint is located in the community hall building up the hill from the store.
24. **Safety** -- (SAF) Lat 64.27 Long 164.49 – Population 0 - The last checkpoint before Nome, just 22 miles away. Here the mushers are on the coast of the Bering Sea and travel on the beach most of the way to Nome.
25. **Nome** -- (OME) Lat 64.30 Long 165.24 -- Population 3,695 -- The end of the Iditarod Trail! Prospectors established this Seward Peninsula city as Anvil City after adjacent Anvil Creek in 1898. A year later gold was discovered in beach sand, and it became a boomtown, home of 30,000 gold seekers. The city was renamed Nome in 1899 after a nearby point on Norton Sound, which got its name in 1853 when a British Navy cartographer misinterpreted a chart notation of "? Name" and recorded it as Nome. The gold rush atmosphere still abounds, especially when "Iditarod Fever" hits town with the entire community turning out to welcome the mushers and visitors alike to their community. Numerous stores, restaurants and bars line Nome's infamous "Front Street", but lodging is at a premium. If the Nugget Inn and Polaris Hotel are full, check with the Nome Convention and Visitors Bureau for the availability of "bed and breakfast" accommodations.