



The BLM & The Iditarod

Introduction

- Cynthia Silvis
 - BLM- Anchorage Field Office and Campbell Creek Science Center
- Campbell Creek Science Center
 - Environmental Education for students and adults
 - Education and Public Events
 - Professional Training
 - Meeting Space

Overview

Iditarod Trail History & Use

Iditarod Race History

BLM Involvement

Iditarod Ceremonial Start

Event Popularity and Past Challenges

The 2026 Iditarod Ceremonial Start

Partners and Activities

Highlights & Lessons Learned



LEO Curtis Racker watching dogsled team arrive on airstrip

Iditarod Trail History

Year	Use
1910-1911	AK Road Commission Spends \$10,000 to construct Seward to Nome trail with a branch to the Iditarod gold fields
1912	Alaska becomes a territory
1914	US Mail carried the length of the trail; US Government takes over construction of the Alaska Railroad, establishing new head quarters on Cook Inlet
1918	WWI draws young miners and workers away from the gold fields leading to the end of the stampede
1925	Diphtheria epidemic threatens Nome; Serum is delivered via dog team from Nenana
1968	The National Trails Act is passed by congress on October 2 nd
1973	The first Iditarod Trail sled dog race is run to Nome
1978	Iditarod National Historic Trail established by Congress

Historical Uses

- Mail and supply delivery
- Transportation between Seward and Iditarod/Flat
- Transport of gold from gold fields



Iditarod Race

- 1973 First Iditarod race to Nome
- The race honors the Alaska's historic mail routes and gold rushes
- Joe Redington Sr. and Dorothy Page
 - Wanted to preserve the dog sled culture and the historic trail



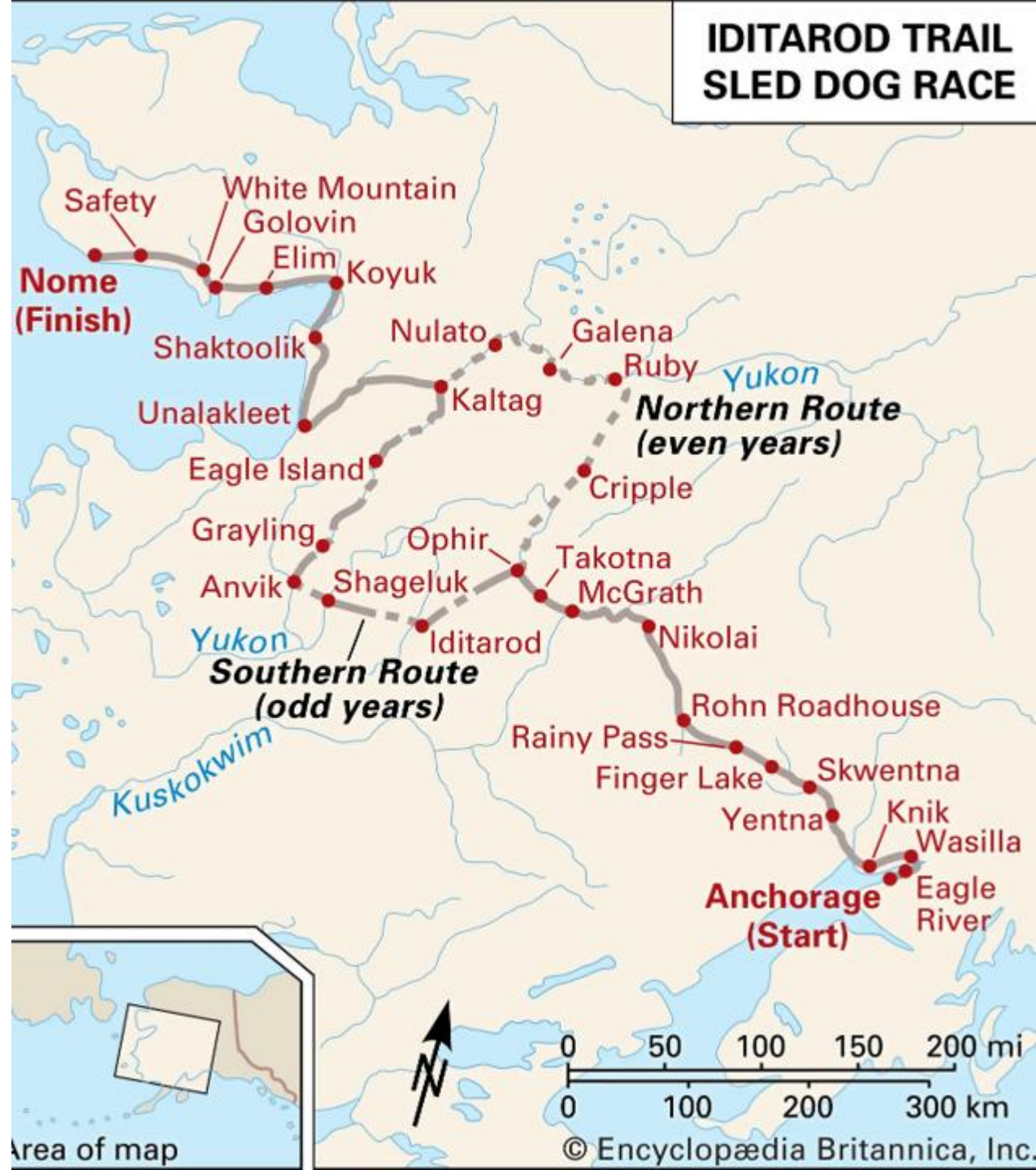
Joe Redington Sr



Dorothy Page

BLM Involvement

- The BLM manages approximately 150 miles of the Iditarod National Historic Trail
- The BLM-AK works with several federal agencies, the state, local, and native governments to manage the trail year round
- The BLM works with the Anchorage Municipality, other federal agencies, and organizations to organize the ceremonial start each year



Iditarod Ceremonial Start

- Anchorage was the official start of the race in 1973 and 1974
- The ceremonial start continues as a festive kick off to the race
- All registered mushers are required to participate in the ceremonial start
- In 2005 the 1st checkpoint was changed from Eagle River to Campbell Tract
 - Shortening the ceremonial start to 11 miles



Popularity of the Event

- The end of the ceremonial start brings hundreds of people to Campbell Tract
- 2007 was the first year an Iditarod Ceremonial Start event was held on Campbell Tract
- The end of the ceremonial start brings hundreds of people to Campbell Tract
 - An average of 1,300 people visit Campbell Tract each year
 - Approximately 400 visit the Campbell Creek Science Center



Past Challenges Faced

- Major Challenges
 - Lack of Snow
 - Covid
 - Staffing
- Minor Challenges
 - Clear communication
 - Signage
 - Food



What questions do you have so far?

2026 Iditarod Ceremonial Start

- First official event of the national Freedom 250 celebration
- Approximately 1,722 hours were spent on planning the event
 - 7 staff and partners made up the core planning team
- 10-12 hours spent setting up for the event
 - 20-30 staff and partners
- 2-4 hours spent cleaning up after the event



Partners

- Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance
- Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
- State of Alaska Historic Preservation Office
- Chugach State Park
- Alaska Resources Library
- University of Alaska Anchorage
- Friends of Campbell Tract
- Alaskan Sled Dog & Racing Association
- Municipality of Anchorage
- National Parks Service
- US Forest Service
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
- The August Fund
- Eagle River Nature Center
- DOI Office of Subsistence Management

Activities

- Viewing of sleds arriving on Campbell Tract
- Information tables about Iditarod Historic Trail
- Junior Musher photo booth
- Iditarod military history display and information
- America 250 Celebration and Alaska State Parks
- Junior Trailblazer info and activity



More Activities

- Meet retired sled dogs
- Information about mushing in Anchorage
- Agency information booths
- Gold Panning
- Snow machines on public lands
- Hot beverages and food trucks



Highlights of Event

- Generated a sense of purpose and pride
- Day of planning and execution went well
- Great event to connect with community
- Seeing members of the public enjoying themselves



Lessons Learned

- Work toward early partner engagement
- Clear communication is key
- Establish a solid decision process
- Have better signage
- Establish more bus stops



Fun Facts

- The largest number of mushers to finish a single race was 78 in 2008.
- Lance Mackey is the only musher to have four straight wins, 2007, 2008, 2009, & 2010
- Dallas Seavey is the youngest musher to run the Iditarod; he turned 18 the day before his first race
- The Red Lantern is awarded to the last musher to cross the finish line

Links to More Iditarod Info

- Iditarod Race History - <https://iditarod.com/race-history/>
- Iditarod The Last Great Race on Earth - <https://iditarod.com/about-us/>
- Booms and Busts: Iditarod Trail History - <https://iditarod.com/booms-and-busts-iditarod-trail-history/>
- Trivia and Facts - <https://iditarod.com/booms-and-busts-iditarod-trail-history/>
- BLM Iditarod National Historic Trail - <https://www.blm.gov/programs/national-conservation-lands/national-scenic-and-historic-trails/iditarod>
- Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance - <https://www.iditarod100.org/>
- Iditarod National Historic Trail Visitor Guide - <https://akgeo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Iditarod-Visitor-Guide-2018-1.pdf>

Citations

- Iditarod National Historic Trail: 100 Years of America's Last Great Gold Rush Trail, Seward to Nome 1910-2010, [Archive](#)
- A half century of Iditarod: the 'Last Great Race' celebrates a milestone, by Alaska Sports Report, Feb 25, 2022, Sled Dog Racing, Lew Freedman, <https://alaskasportsreport.com/2022/02/a-half-century-of-iditarod-the-last-great-race-celebrates-a-milestone/>
- Dorothy Page Honored, May 03, 2018, <https://iditarod.com/2018/05/03/dorothy-page-honored/>
- Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, Susan H. Bucher, Britannica Editors, Apr 04, 2026, <https://www.britannica.com/sports/Iditarod-Trail-Sled-Dog-Race>