

The Tripod

February 2023



Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance, PO Box 2323, Seward AK 99664
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The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.

The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance promotes awareness of the Iditarod Trail and its gold rush and Alaska Native heritage by encouraging education programs and historical research, assisting in the protection, improvement, maintenance and marking of the Trail and developing partnerships that foster stewardship, commitments and support.

NEW NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

The federal government has designated the Chilkoot Trail as a national historic trail. The designation, which was included in the federal omnibus spending bill, was announced January 7 in a press release.

“It’s a great honor to be recognized as the Chilkoot National Historic Trail,” said Angela Wetz, superintendent of the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park.

The Chilkoot Trail is the 20th in the nation to get the designation and, at 16 miles, the shortest. The designation could lead to some funding opportunities.

“There is some trail system funding that’s out there, not necessarily something we would get right away,” Wetz said. “But we would be able to compete for those funds in the Park Service.”

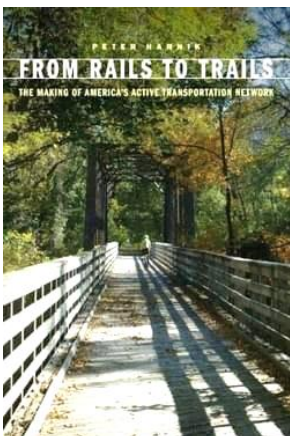
Right now, the trail is closed due to flood damage from an October storm. Wetz says the designation will not affect the pace of repair.

“We are aiming towards an August 1 opening, but we still have a lot of logistical issues with supply chains and everything else to get us there,” she said.

To celebrate the designation, the park intends to hold a ceremony when the trail reopens.

NEW BOOK

Peter Harnik’s new book, *From Rails to Trails*, published by University of Nebraska Press, covers the political, cultural, transportation, design, and land-use issues that have shaped the rail-trail movement. Peter Harnik with David Burwell established the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy in 1986. Peter has a wealth of knowledge and experience to share. He tells many stories about the local efforts to build coalitions and obtain funding to convert abandoned tracks into trails for bicyclists, walkers, equestrians, and more.



At its peak in 1916, the railroad network was about 254,000 miles. In 2020 about 137,000 miles were still in use. The 60,000 miles abandoned before 1970 were absorbed into the landscape and lost forever. Today about 23,000 miles are trails or being converted to trails. Peter states this leaves about 34,000 miles unaccounted for and he encourages the next generation of rail-trail advocates to concentrate on finding these miles and developing them into trails.



FROM THE PAST....

Iditarod Pioneer February 1,1913

PARCEL POST NOW IN OPERATION

On the last mail Postmaster Thurston received an intimation from headquarters that the parcel post law was operative in Alaska, but as the special stamps* required for the service have not arrived he wired the department asking what should be done in the matter. Thursday afternoon last a telegram arrived from Washington as follows:

Pending receipt of parcel post stamps use ordinary stamps to Seattle only.

BRITT, Third assistant

It will thus be seen that while the parcel post law is operative here, it is limited to parcels destined for Seattle until the special stamps arrive, which may be at any time, and residents of Iditarod are entitled to experiment in that direction. The limit set on parcels is 11 pounds, and the goods sent must neither in form nor in kind be such as might injure the carriers or destroy the mail sacks or matter therein.

The lowest rate is 5 cents per 1 pound up to 50 miles, and from that starting point rates are graduated until a charge of 12 cents a pound is reached for distances over 1,800 miles. A partial weighting 11 pounds thus could this be sent from here to New York for \$1.32 unless the circular misinforms us.

Parcels will be delivered at all free delivery offices and to patrons residing on all rail and star routes. There may be registered and insured up to \$50 and special delivery can be arranged for.

Iditarod Pioneer March 8, 1913

MUST USE ONLY SPECIAL STAMPS

The special stamps required for the parcel post service are now available and may be had in denominations of from 1 cent to 25 cents. In future all merchandise parcels, however small, must bear these stamps.

It has been the custom to drop small merchandise parcels in the letterbox, but this practice is against the parcel postal regulations. Should packages be dropped in the letterbox contrary to the regulations, and without the address of the sender written in the corner, they will be sent to the dead letter office and not forwarded it to their destination.

* In 1912 an act of Congress established a fourth-class mail rate for small packages. The act also called for new stamps for this rate, 12 large stamps, all with the same color, were issued in sheets of 45. The stamps were unpopular with postal workers and customers alike. On July 1, 1913, regular stamps took their place. Parcel post stamps became valid for regular postage as well.

These stamps are still popular with stamp collectors but the prices for the stamps are much more than the original value, for example an unused 1 cent parcel post stamp now sells for \$7 and an unused 10 cent one can cost \$99.

ANNUAL ALASKA TRAILS CONFERENCE

The annual Alaska Trails Conference will be held April 12-14 at the BP Energy Center in Anchorage. This year there will be both in-person and virtual options for attendance. Send your ideas and comments to: office@alaska-trails.org

ALASKA TRAILS HIRING FOR SEASONAL TRAIL WORK

Information for all the positions and application instructions at: <https://www.alaska1trails.org/>

