



# Campbell Creek Science Center

## Go for Gold: Travel the Iditarod Trail

The Iditarod National Historic Trail was once *the* way to get from the coast to gold prospecting areas in Interior Alaska. Transport back in time to become a musher discovering the opportunities and challenges of traveling the Trail during Alaska's gold rush through this interactive game.



### Directions

1. In this game, you will become a musher driving a sled pulled by a team of hearty dogs. You will travel from one end of the trail to the town of Iditarod. Review the trail map on page 2 before you begin your journey.
2. To set up the game, print the game signs or scroll through them on your mobile device or computer.
3. Directions on the signs will guide you along the trail. Start at sign 1 and read the instructions to begin the game.
4. Each sign includes a phrase that was used during the gold rush. Can you figure out what each one means? Look up their definitions on the final page.



### Materials

- Game signs (either printed or on your mobile device)

### Questions

- What challenges did people face while traveling along the Iditarod Trail?
- What qualities did people and dogs need to travel the Trail?

### If you print the signs:

- Cut signs along the dotted lines and lay them on the ground in order from 1-18. Spread them out, placing 1 and 18 as far apart as you can to better imitate how long the Trail is.

### If you are using your mobile device:

- Scroll to Sign 1 and read the instructions to begin. Take five big steps between each sign to imitate traveling the Trail.

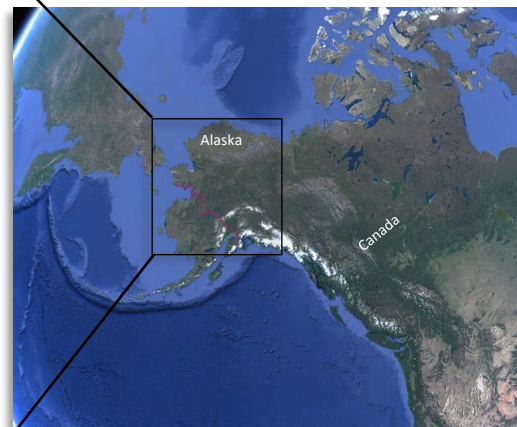




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## The Iditarod National Historic Trail

The Trail marks an important transportation corridor in Alaska. Before gold was discovered, there were sections of the Trail that were used regularly for travel between various parts of the coast and the interior. But when gold was discovered near Iditarod, there was a compelling reason for the Trail to be established all the way to and from Seward. In 1978, Congress designated a continuous route from Seward to Nome as the official Iditarod National Historic Trail.



To learn more about the Iditarod National Historic Trail, visit [blm.gov/alaska/itarod](http://blm.gov/alaska/itarod). Also check out the story map at <https://www.iditarod100.org/story-map.html> to follow along in the footsteps of a musher on the trail in 1920.





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# 1

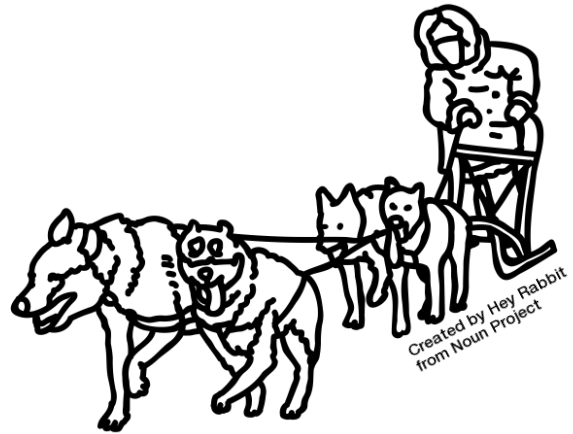
## Seward, Alaska

**Miles Traveled: 0**

**“Raise the bump!”**

Welcome to Alaska! It is January in 1912. You have just arrived on a ship from Seattle, Washington and you have “gold fever.” You have five sled dogs and a sled. It is time to mush 520 miles north along the Iditarod Trail to the town of Iditarod to prospect for gold.

The trail is well used and there are roadhouses for you to stay in each night. Your dogs will pull the heavy sled, and most of the time you will walk beside it.



You are excited to head out onto the trail as soon as you can, but some of the mushers in town tell you to spend a few days testing out your gear and practicing your mushing skills. Now, you must choose:

Why delay? There’s gold out there! You mush out of town. Go to **Sign 2**.



Stay in Seward to practice. Go to **Sign 3**.



sciencecenter@blm.gov  
blm.gov/CCSC | @BLMCCSC  
5600 Science Center Drive  
Anchorage, AK 99507





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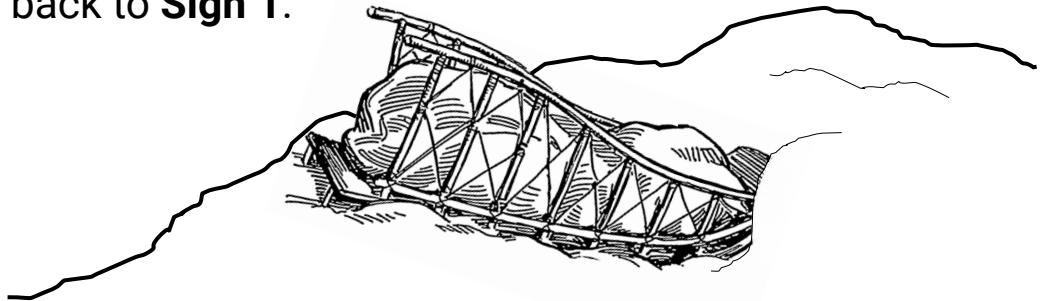
# 2

## Just outside Seward Miles Traveled: 5

“Give the go-by!”

Oh no! You do not know how to tell your dogs to go left or right. After just a couple of miles the dogs veer off the trail and your sled crashes into a snowbank and breaks. You will have to go back to Seward to buy a new sled.

Walk slowly back to **Sign 1**.



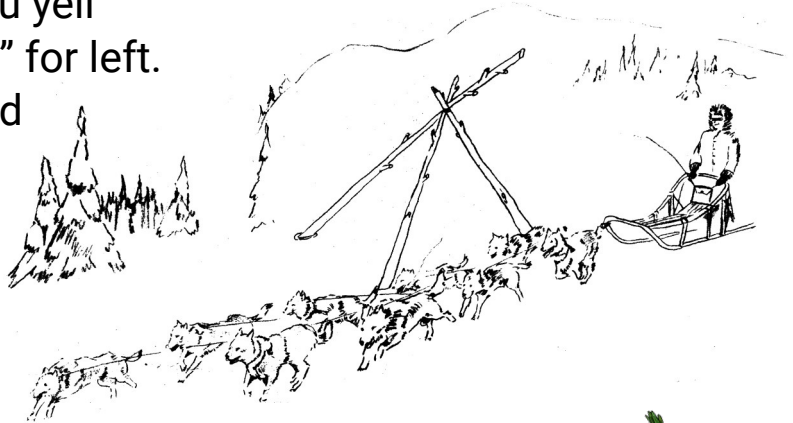
# 3

## Moose Pass Miles Traveled: 30

“Long mush!”

Wahoo! After just a few miles you feel like you are getting the hang of mushing! As you head into a twisty part of the trail you yell “Gee” for right and “Haw” for left. Hold on tight as your sled takes the turns!

Mush on to **Sign 4**.





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# 4

## Glacier Roadhouse Miles Traveled: 74

**“Eat a square!”**

You have heard the Glacier Roadhouse is one of the nicest places to stay in all of Cook Inlet. You pull in, put your team in the dog barn, boil them some dried salmon and rice, then head inside for a hot meal. You are sore from all the walking you have done.

Rub your tired muscles, then head to **Sign 5**.



# 5

## Knik Trading Post Miles Traveled: 130

**“Town dust!”**



As you pull into the Knik Trading Company, another sled team pulls in too. The driver tells you they are carrying over 1,000 pounds of gold from the Iditarod area. You are more excited than ever to get to Iditarod!

You wake up extra early the next morning and head to **Sign 6**.





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# 6

## Susitna Station Miles Traveled: 180

**“Buckle to it!”**

After walking more than 25 miles, you finally reach the next roadhouse. While you are there, the owner offers to sell the roadhouse to you.

You continue on to Iditarod with hopes to strike it rich!  
Go to **Sign 8**.



You buy the roadhouse!  
Go to **Sign 7**.



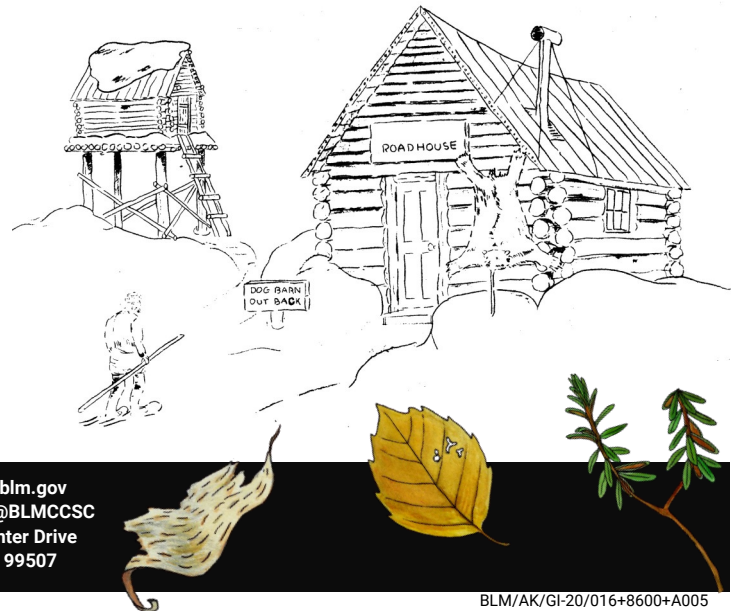
# 7

## Susitna Station Miles Traveled: 180

**“Make the raise!”**

You buy the roadhouse and enjoy giving passing mushers a warm place to stay and a hot meal. You run the roadhouse for eight years and make enough money to live on. You sell the roadhouse to another prospector and move back to Seattle. Well done!

But, you still dream of gold.  
Journey back to Alaska and restart at **Sign 1**.





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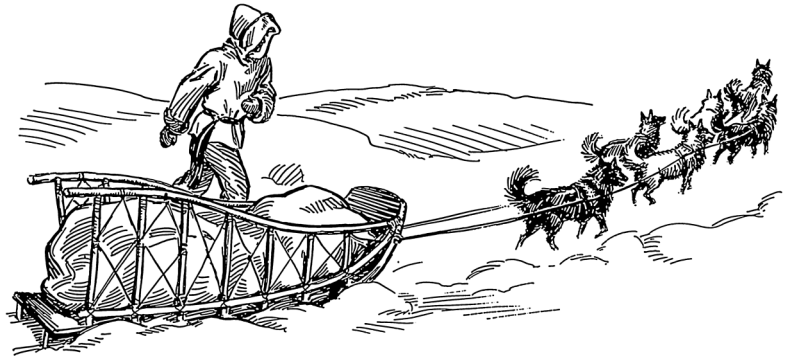
# 8

## Lake View Roadhouse Miles Traveled: 199

“Tinhorn!”

As you mush, the trail suddenly goes downhill. You jump on the sled and enjoy the ride until you suddenly hit a bump! You fall off the sled and the dogs keep running without you!

Run to catch up, then continue to **Sign 9**.

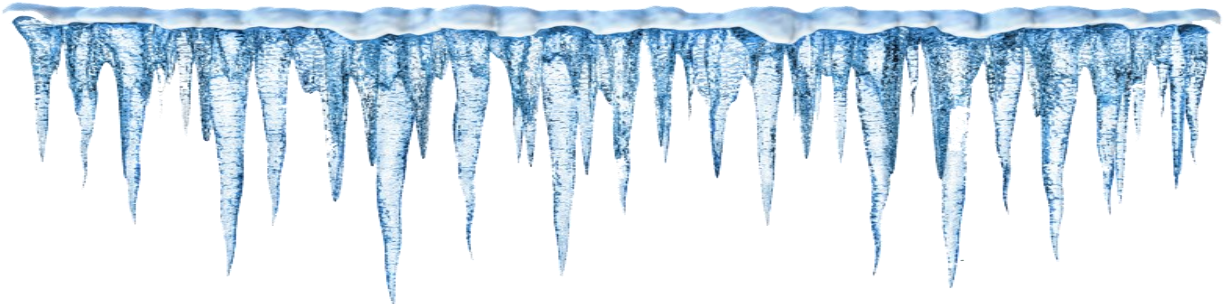


# 9

## Halfway Roadhouse Miles Traveled: 240

“Out of sight!”

Brrr! The temperature suddenly drops to -55 degrees Fahrenheit. It is so cold that ice forms on your eyelashes, making it hard to see. Stop and brush the ice off your lashes, then go to **Sign 10**.





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# 10

## Happy River Roadhouse Miles Traveled: 260

“Arctics!”

You are making good time up the trail when suddenly the wind picks up and the snow starts blowing. It is a blizzard!! Do you make camp and wait for the storm to pass or try to make it to the next roadhouse?

You make camp for the night.  
Go to **Sign 13**.



You continue on to the next roadhouse.  
Go to **Sign 11**.



# 11

## Lost! Miles Traveled: 290

“Dough gods!”

Oh no! You lost the trail in the blizzard. Turn in a circle five times to try to find it. Suddenly, the blizzard starts to get worse, so you make camp for the night. Your dogs curl up in the snow as you cover yourself up in your sled. You dream of a hot meal and survive the windy, snowy night. Head to **Sign 12**.







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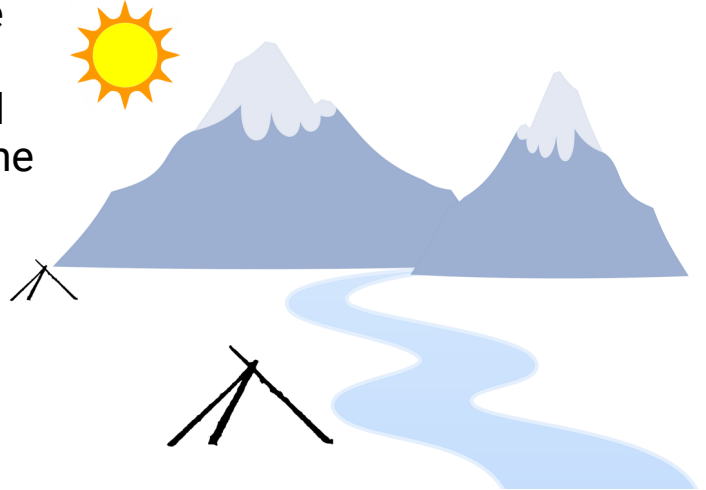
# 12

## Off Trail

**Miles Traveled: 300**

**“Freeze-up!”**

Finally, the storm lifts! The next day is clear and calm. You admire the mountains in the distance and listen to the silence around you. You find a frozen river to travel on. The ice is smooth and fast and you soon find the tripods that mark the trail again.



Continue to **Sign 14**.



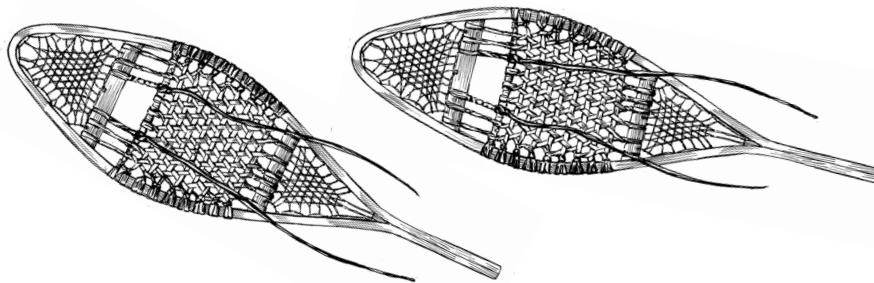
# 13

## Pass Creek Roadhouse

**Miles Traveled: 289**

**“Trail shoes!”**

The next day is sunny and beautiful, but the blizzard has blown the trail shut with huge snow drifts. Strap on your snowshoes and break trail in front of your team so they can make it through the deep snow. Continue to **Sign 14**.



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blm.gov/CCSC | @BLMCCSC  
5600 Science Center Drive  
Anchorage, AK 99507





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# 14

## Rainy Pass Roadhouse Miles Traveled: 302

**“Tall rustling!”**

At the Rainy Pass Roadhouse, you find a mail sled parked outside. The musher who is supposed to deliver the mail is ill and cannot take the mail to Iditarod. He asks you to carry the mail to Iditarod for him instead. Now, make your choice:



You carry the mail to Iditarod. Go to **Sign 15**.



You continue without the mail. Go to **Sign 16**.



# 15

## Rohn River Roadhouse Miles Traveled: 311

**“Done up!”**

There is over 200 pounds of mail to deliver! You load it all up onto your sled but you have to help your dogs pull it on the steep sections. You only make it 11 miles to the Rohn River Roadhouse.

Groan loudly, spend the night, and then continue to **Sign 17**.





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# 16

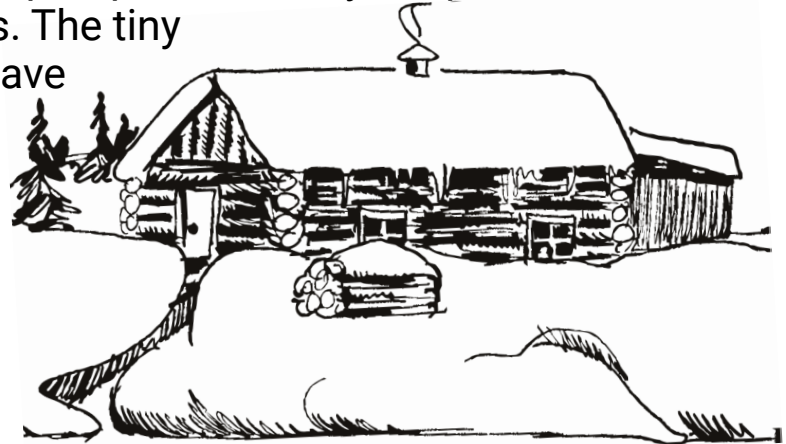
## Ruby Roadhouse

**Miles Traveled: 487**

**“Chew the rag!”**

You make good time over the next few days. The Ruby Roadhouse is full of other prospectors and you spend the evening swapping stories. The tiny cabin is so full that you have to sleep on the table, but you don't mind.

Go to **Sign 17**.



Alaska Native Knowledge Network

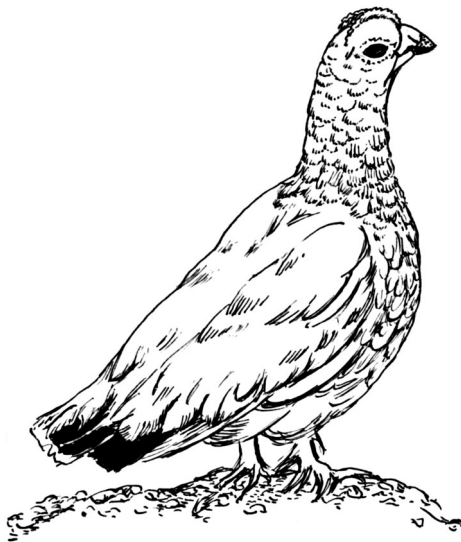


# 17

## Bonanza Roadhouse

**Miles Traveled: 501**

**“Fool's hen!”**



You reach the Bonanza Roadhouse. Another musher is already there and offers to share his ptarmigan dinner. You enjoy the hot food and roll up in your blankets on a bunk for the night.

When you wake up, continue to **Sign 18**.





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# 18

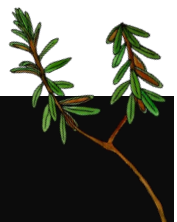
**Iditarod**  
**Miles Traveled: 520**

**“Alaska Fever!”**

You made it! As you pull into town, you head to the first hotel you see. In the hotel, you see a flyer announcing a sled dog race being held in town.



You had so much fun mushing the last three weeks that you think you might want to enter! But first, you want to figure out where you are going to look for gold. Good luck on the rest of your adventure!





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## Definitions of Gold Rush Phrases

1. **Raise the bump:** To get excited.
2. **Give the go-by:** To give up or leave something behind.
3. **Long mush:** A long trip or journey.
4. **Eat a square:** To eat a square meal.
5. **Town dust:** Gold dust that was used to pay for things.
6. **Buckle to it:** Hard work.
7. **Make the raise:** To earn enough money with which to go home and finance a farm or business.
8. **Tinhorn:** A beginner – someone who does not know what they are doing.
9. **Out of sight:** Out of this world, unbelievable.
10. **Arctics:** Felt-lined rubber boots.
11. **Dough gods:** Bacon grease and biscuits warmed in a skillet.
12. **Freeze-up:** The freezing over of a body of water, such as a river or lake.
13. **Trail shoes:** Snowshoes.
14. **Tall rustling:** Hard work to achieve a goal.
15. **Done up:** Being too tired to stand up.
16. **Chew the rag:** To chat in a friendly and prolonged way.
17. **Fool's hen:** A ptarmigan.
18. **Alaska Fever:** The attraction of the state that drew people to return to live, work, and explore Alaska.

