

IDITAROD TRAIL COMMITTEE, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
February 17, 2014
Telephonic Meeting

The meeting of the Iditarod Trail Committee Board of Directors was called to order by President Andy Baker at 10:02 a.m.

Members present (telephonically): Andy Baker, Aaron Burmeister, Stan Foo, John Handeland, Mike Jonrowe, Mike Owens, Danny Seybert, Rick Swenson and Aliy Zirkle

Members absent: None

Others present: Stan Hooley, Executive Director; Mark Nordman, Race Director; Andy Willis, Race Coordinator, Joanne Potts, Assistant to the Race Director/Recording Secretary, Molly Farr, Communications Coordinator, Darrell Davis, Re-start Coordinator and Stu Nelson, Chief Veterinarian Hooley noted that Nordman and Willis

Baker said he was about to get on a plane and if he had to sign off, asked Seybert to take over.

Hooley suggested we start with Nordman and Willis who have been most directly involved in being the eyes and ears in what we have to deal with.

Nordman noted that a lot of work has been done from all aspects since December.

Willis noted that the plan for prerace trail work was put together in November. We have people out of McGrath and people out of Deshka working.

The Dalzell ice is greater than before. It's improved since the February 4 flight. Conditions are improving. Conditions in Dalzell Burn area are pretty similar to last year's. The Dalzell does not have the shelf ice, 6 to 8 foot holes that we've had in the past. It's now frozen a few feet above the water surface and the work will be a lot easier.

Out in the Burn in October there was no snow. Now we have snow, not feet, but as much as we've had in the past. The Steps are in. Snow there is similar to around Anchorage and Wasilla. 30 inches of snow got rained on, beaten down on. It's hard. Going back to Shell Lake with rain we've gotten there are spots with water and there's ice. It's slippery and icy, with crews going over it. It can be rerouted to make it safer.

Willis noted that conditions are favorable. Yes, conditions to Willow to McGrath are similar to what we've done in the past. Some places will be easier and less work than we have had in the past. We've done this before in these conditions and we can do it again.

Willis said he has been to Skwentna and Old Skwentna on river and on overland route from Willow to Old Skwentna. Right now you can get a hook in where there is snow but not on the ice. The overland trail right now would be his recommendation, Cruz's trail by Rebels Roost and comes out by the Big Swamp. Cruz Construction will make that trail to our standards.

We'd go off Willow Lake and then take the trail at Willow lake take a right and go down the creek across the bridge to Deshka Landing, up around that way, the Cruz trail.

Willis noted that trail conditions are very workable, with the heavy equipment it can grind up the ice and make a surface you can run on and they have offered to go further if needed. They also have a planer that will rough up the lake, grinding up 4 to 5 inches of ice.

Willis said the ground up ice will be on Willow Lake and a few other lakes but the machine for working the crusty snow will provide a nice surface. Once you go over it, it will set in 12 hours. It will be a hard fast trail.

Burmeister expressed concern about the long range forecast for warming. Long range in Fairbanks is still at or above freezing, but it was noted that it will still have snow and be a safe trail.

Willis explained that the trail is hard and compacted and the heavy equipment can smooth it out but the ice is over 30 inches. Things are harder now than they've been all winter. It could take a month of warming.

There is 30 inches of ice at Willow Lake and a skiff of snow. Dave Cruz can rough that up to make it make it possible to get traction. You will not get a hook set in on Willow Lake.

Cruz will put snow back anywhere he takes it off and will berm it back up.

Willis noted that we would have a little bit of river at Yentna and he'll put the snow anywhere he needs to. From there we'd head overland to Skwentna.

Zirkle commented that we're going to run into challenging conditions wherever we go. She said she hadn't run on the Yukon to the west but it's glare ice to the East. Challenging conditions probably like we're going to run into everywhere this year.

Handeland/Seybert moved to go into recess until 1 p.m. Motion passed.

The board came out of recess at 1:03 p.m.

All members were present except for Mike Jonrowe who signed off prior to the recess.

Baker asked Dr. Nelson for his opinion and Nelson noted that this issue has been looked at very thoroughly and said he puts faith in the judgment and experience of those who have done the legwork. He pointed out that when the decision is made, we'll do the best we can and noted that the mushers will be well versed in whatever route we end up taking.

The president asked for a unanimous decision.

The Board of Directors determined that the Race would take place as usual, starting in Willow

The meeting adjourned at 1:20 p.m.