



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Iditarod XLIX restart and finish to take place at Deshka Landing

WASILLA, Alaska - Today, the Iditarod Trail Committee confirmed that both the restart and the finish of the Last Great Race on Earth will take place at Deshka Landing. The decision was mutually made by the Iditarod and the Willow Area Community Organization due to concern for COVID-19 risk mitigation at the Willow Area Community Center, which is also undergoing construction projects on facilities regularly utilized by the Iditarod.

Deshka Landing, located approximately 7.5 road miles from Willow Lake, serves as a year-round access point to the Lower Susitna Drainage consisting of the Susitna River, Deshka River, Yentna River, Alexander Creek and all tributaries. This change for the 2021 race, along with the Iditarod Gold Trail Loop race route, further allows race organizers to safely execute and continue to protect the communities along the trail, the mushers, volunteers and Iditarod personnel.

At this point, there will be very limited spectator opportunities outside of the secure area where only race essential personnel and participants will be allowed. All race fans will be able to watch the restart and the finish at Iditarod.com and via Iditarod's partner broadcast media outlet, KTUU.

On Sunday, March 7, at 2 p.m., the 54 currently rostered teams will depart Deshka Landing and travel the Iditarod Gold Trail Loop out to the mining ghost town of Flat before looping back to the traditional Iditarod southern route in a course that is approximately 860 miles. On this route, the teams will travel through the Alaska Range, traverse the Happy River Steps and navigate the notorious Dalzell Gorge, twice.

Since the completion of the successful 2020 race, Iditarod race organizers have constructed a comprehensive COVID-19 mitigation plan. The plan is built on checkpoint "bubbles," robust testing protocols, mandatory face masks, social distancing and reducing staff to only crucial positions. The complete plan can be found [here](#) on Iditarod.com.

For the 49th running of the race in 2021, eight of the top 10 finishers from the 2020 race are returning, as well as four past Iditarod champions.

Additional details regarding the Deshka Landing restart and finish will be available at a later date on Iditarod.com.

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About the Iditarod: The Iditarod Trail Committee is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve the rich tradition of the Alaska sled dog and the Iditarod Trail. The organization is charged with coordinating the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, an annual long-distance sled dog race stretching from Anchorage to Nome for nearly a 1,000-mile journey through Alaska over the roughest, most breathtaking terrain in the world.

In 2021, the Iditarod will run a modified route to allow for community safety precautions. Read more about the Iditarod's COVID-19 mitigation protocols [here](#). For more information, visit: www.iditarod.com.

Media contact:

Bri Kelly, Thompson & Co. PR

bri@thompsonpr.com