

Box Canyon Cabins

Highlights & Happenings

February 2020



A popular tourist activity around Seward is taking a ride with a dog sled team. Turning Heads Kennels and Seavey's Ididaride both offer exciting options.

At Box Canyon Cabins, we are fortunate to have two well-established sled dog kennels right around the corner from our property. The kennels are owned and operated by families who regularly compete in the famous Iditarod Sled Dog Race.

The first is Seavey's Ididaride Sled Dog Tours. The Seavey family is well-known throughout Alaska for their long-time participation in the great race. In fact, they have had two family members win the event a combined seven times: Mitch in 2004, 2013 and 2017; and his son Dallas in 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2016.

The second is Turning Heads Kennels, which is owned by Travis Beals and Sarah

Stokey. Beals has run the Iditarod every year since 2013 and finished in the top 10 the past two years, including a 5th place finish in 2019.

Stokey ran the race in 2016 and 2019, and her best finish to date is 34th.

Each kennel offers winter and summer sled dog tours, and both also offer glacier sled dog tours with travel to the glacier by helicopter.

Whenever we have guests visit the kennels and take a sled dog ride, they come back raving about the experience. We're just glad they're our neighbors!

Alaska Fun Fact

The 2020 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race gets underway on Saturday, March 7 in Anchorage. The race was established by Joe Redington, Sr., in 1973 as a way to preserve the culture of sled dogs, contrary to some information stating the Iditarod was started to commemorate the delivery of diphtheria antitoxin to Nome in 1925.

The Alaskan Iditarod



The last great race on Earth!

The Iditarod preserves the culture of sled dogs

Since 1973, mushers have challenged themselves in a race nicknamed The Last Great Race on Earth®, racing each March from Anchorage to Nome, Alaska. Nearly a thousand miles in length, mushers and teams travel over mountains and across remote flat tundra, to the western Alaskan coast and finally to the town of Nome, established when gold was discovered there in 1898.

The route most of the race follows is a trail created long before the race became a race. Used by Native Alaskans for hunting and travel to villages, the Iditarod Trail was cleared in 1908 by government employees. However, it wasn't until the 1910 gold discoveries in villages such as Iditarod—a ghost town today—Ruby, Ophir, Flat, Nome, Elim and a few others, that it became regularly used by dog sled teams to deliver mail and supplies to miners and settlements.

By 1973, dog teams in the small Alaskan Native villages were becoming replaced by snow machines, nicknamed iron dogs. Joe Redington, Sr. lived in Alaska and spent much time using dog teams himself in his work. He thought it was important to preserve the culture of sled dogs and their use in Alaska, and he also wanted to have the Iditarod Trail recognized as a National Historic Trail.

These two factors inspired Redington to create The Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race®.

The Iditarod's first winner was Dick Wilmarth, who finished the race in 20 days, 0 hours, 49 minutes and 41 seconds.

(Source: Iditarod.edu)

Fireside Chats

"We're moving where? Why? Why are we moving there?"

That was my reaction as a 14-year-old when I was told by my mom in April, 1978, that we were moving from Charleston, South Carolina to Fairbanks, Alaska. And why wouldn't it be? I was going into high school. I had played junior varsity football and was beginning my last year of Pony League baseball. I also was on the verge of having a girlfriend, or at least I felt pretty good about my chances.

You get the picture. A move to Alaska wasn't exactly in my plans, but seldom does a young teenager have control over such things.

Shortly after my rapid-fire questions to mom, I found out that she was remarrying and her future husband had accepted a job with the City of Fairbanks. The plan was for them to drive to Fairbanks in May, and I was going to fly up in early July. My baseball coach wanted me to complete the season, so he suggested I stay with he and his family until it was time to leave.

So, on Monday, July, 3, I boarded the plane and left the Palmetto State for the Last Frontier. I really had no idea what to expect. You have to keep in mind that information was not as easily accessible as it is today, since the Internet had not yet been created. But I knew Alaska would offer many outdoor activities and, as a kid who grew up doing a lot of hunting, fishing, canoeing and camping, I decided to keep an open mind. And I'm glad I did.

I had been in Fairbanks a little more than a week when Mom informed me that we would be going to Mt. McKinley National Park (the name was changed to Denali National Park and Preserve in 1980) for a two-day camping trip. Since I had yet make friends and was tired of hanging around the house, I was excited.

For those who've never been, the park has one road in and vehicles must travel the same road out. Also, back in



the late '70's, park visitors were allowed to drive their personal vehicles through the entire park and to the last campground, Wonder Lake. Today, personal vehicles are only allowed to drive a small part.

We left Fairbanks around 2 p.m. And reached the park about 2.5 hours later. Once inside the park, we had another 3.5-hour drive to reach the campground. Now, keep in mind, it was daylight for 24 hours, so we weren't necessarily fighting the clock.

As we made our way along the winding and sometimes edge-of-the-cliff scary gravel road, we spotted three to four moose, a few elk and a large blonde-colored grizzly with two cubs.

But the thing I will remember most is the effect seeing Mt. McKinley (Denali) had on me. We were fortunate in that the weather and skies around the Great One were near perfect. This is important because at 20,308 feet, Mt. McKinley is tall enough to create its own weather, so it's often covered by clouds.

During our drive, we caught occasional glimpses of the mountain's peak. But about halfway to our campsite, as we rounded a sharp corner and crested a hill, there it was. The magnificent mountain appeared to rise up from the earth and reach all the way to the heavens.

To this day, the sight of Mt. McKinley remains the most impressive thing I've ever seen. It's a memory I will carry with me to my grave.

And, it was in that moment, I knew that I was going to be okay in Alaska.

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