

Chugach National Forest

Johnson Pass Trail Iditarod National Historic Trail - Southern Trek



Seward Ranger District

Difficulty: Moderate

Length: 23 miles (one way)

Time: 2-3 days

Elevation Gain: 1000 feet

Season: Year-round

Public Use: High

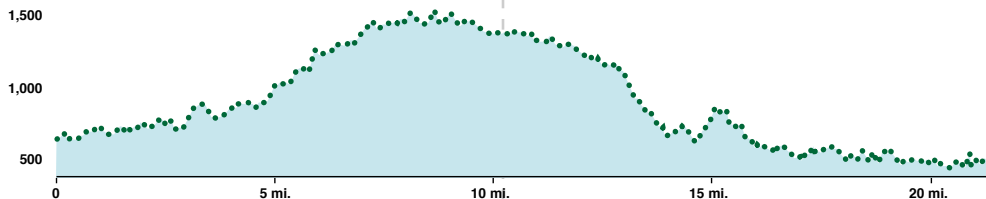
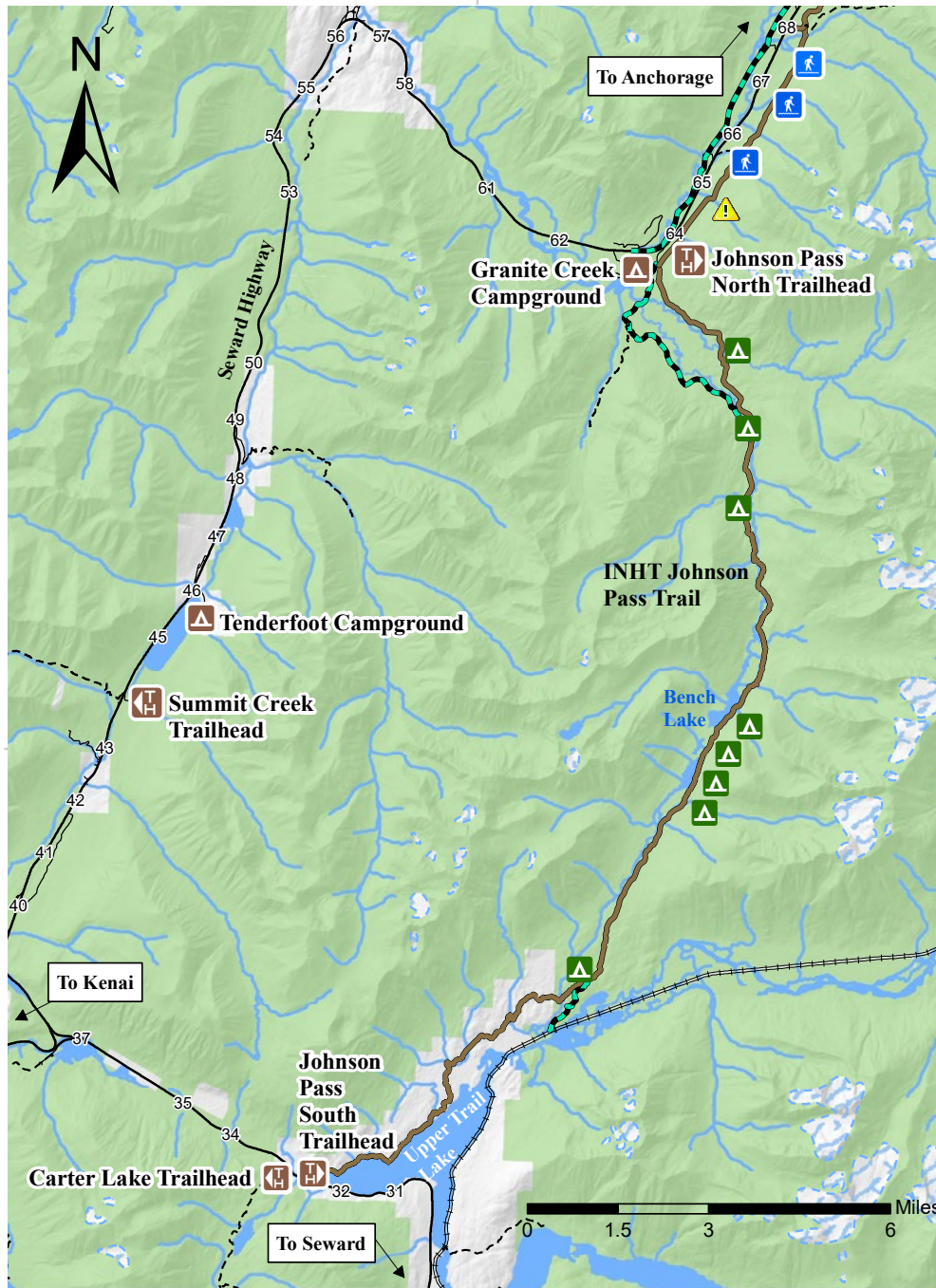
Grade: 5-20%, a few steeper sections

Trail Condition: Gradual uphill with short, steep sections. May be muddy until mid-June.

Getting there: North Trailhead is at mile 64 of the Seward Highway: head south on signed gravel road.

South Trailhead is at mile 32.5 of the Seward Highway: turn on signed pullout for trailhead.

Users: Hiker, Mountain Climber, Forger, Cyclist



Map Legend

- Iditarod - Year-round Trails
- Iditarod - Summer Use Trail
- Iditarod - Winter Use Trail
- General Use Trail
- Backcountry Campsite
- USFS Cabin
- Trailhead
- Forging Site
- Ranger Station



PART OF THE IDITAROD NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

The Iditarod National Historic Trail - Southern Trek (INHT) is a 180 mile portion of the 1000 mile-long route. Winter travellers used it from the late 1800s to early 1900, though parts have been used for millenia by Alaska Native cultures. When you walk the INHT, you're walking in the footsteps of Alaska's indigenous people, and its gold miners, pioneers and dogsled mushers.

TRAIL INFORMATION

Johnson Pass Trail has spectacular scenery and some extreme elevation changes.

This is an extremely popular mountain biking trail during the summer, so keep an eye out, especially on the weekends when the trail is very busy.

This can be an excellent family outing for those who like to hike longer distances. Day hiking is good from both the north and south trailheads.

From the south trailhead hikers pass through alder, willow, hemlock and beetle-kill spruce forests. The first two miles offer vistas of Upper Trail Lake. As the trail levels it changes to a subalpine ecosystem, with lower shrubs and a multitude of flowers.

From the north end the trail winds through open meadows and forest. By Bench Creek Bridge, the trail enters a V-shaped valley that continues to Bench Lake in subalpine tundra.

Wildlife includes moose, wolves, black and brown bear, Dall sheep, Willow Ptarmigan and Spruce Grouse.

Hunting is permitted in designated seasons. Fish for grayling in Bench Lake and Rainbow Trout in Johnson Lake.

Please review **Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)** hunting and fishing regulations for more details.



JOHNSON PASS WAGON ROAD

Before the Seward Highway was constructed, Johnson Pass Trail was a heavily-used 12-foot wide wagon road built to reach gold-mines and for mail delivery.

Most signs of the trail's past are gone. A few pieces of large spruce poles, the remnants of the "corduroy" road used to cross marshy areas, are all that remain.



WHITE'S ROADHOUSE

Roadhouses, such as this one run by "Mom" and "Dad" White in the early 1900s, were spread out along the Iditarod National Historic Trail.

They offered dog mushers the chance to rest and enjoy a hot meal for just a few cents. They were conveniently located about 20 miles apart.

Please do not disturb historic sites.

THE HARRY JOHNSON TRAIL

The trail got its name from Mr. Johnson, who was an original Alaskan pioneer.

Johnson trapped, sold furs, and prospected for gold in the area around Moose Pass and Hope for many years in the early part of the 20th century.

A social man, with friends from Seward to Anchorage, he was also an accomplished wildlife photographer.



BENCH LAKE

This mirrored lake nestled in the mountains is 13 miles from the **Johnson Pass South** trailhead and 9 miles from the **Johnson Pass North** trailhead.

It would be worth it to bring your rod. Fishing for arctic grayling is a real treat in the summer months.



KNOW Before you GO!

From the south, the trail travels through a dense spruce forest of reddish-gray beetle kill trees. These trees are a major fire hazard. Please be extra-careful while building and extinguishing any campfire.

Winter travel may be hazardous due to avalanches, thin lake ice, and white-out conditions above tree line.

PLAN AHEAD

You are responsible for your own safety. Proper equipment and good judgment are essential for safe travel while on the Chugach National Forest.

Filter or boil water for five minutes before drinking to avoid giardia.

All creeks present hazards that can be dangerous. Cross creeks at low water levels. During winter use extreme caution when crossing bodies of water. Remember you cross at your own risk.

Winter travel can be hazardous and trails can cross through avalanche-prone slopes. Visit www.cnfaic.org for the latest avalanche conditions.

Let someone know your travel plans. Be Bear Aware and keep your distance from wildlife.

Contact a USDA Forest Service office for specific trail safety precautions.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

Seward Ranger District

33599 Ranger Station Spur (mile post 23.5)
Seward, AK 99664
(907) 288-3178

Chugach National Forest

161 East 1st Ave., Door 8
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
(907) 743-9500

www.fs.usda.gov/chugach



- Plan Ahead & Prepare
- Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Dispose of Waste Properly
- Leave What You Find
- Minimize Campfire Impacts
- Respect Wildlife
- Be Considerate of Other Visitors