

Lynch (1979)

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THE IDITAROD LOOP

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The Iditarod Loop extends southwest from Takotna along Fourth of July Creek and Bonanza Creek, through Flat and Iditarod, then northeast back to Ophir where it rejoins the main trail. This route was established soon after the discovery of gold in the area around Iditarod.

The loop follows streambeds for the most part, winding through valleys and crossing low passes through the Kuskokwim Mountains. Between Flat and Iditarod the trail was supplemented as early as 1911-12 by a wagon road. One mile of the 8-mile wagon road was constructed and maintained by private individuals, while the Alaska Road Commission was responsible for the rest (ARC Annual Report, 1912:20). A wagon road also extended up to the head of Flat Creek for transportation of heavy dredge machinery (Eakin 1912:301).

The towns of Flat and Iditarod were also connected by a tramway which is still easily visible from the air. The tramway traverses the low hills between the two towns in a nearly straight line (Plate C-48). It was in use by 1911-12 (ARC Annual Report, 1912;20), and operated during the summer months for carrying freight to Flat from the river terminus at Iditarod (Brooks, 1914:255). Many other trails are visible between the two towns, indicating that various alternative routes were used over the years (Plate C-48).

[IDT-024]

From Iditarod the trail extends northward along the Iditarod River for approximately 20 miles to Shermeier's Halfway Roadhouse site. Traces of