

Overcoming the barriers of getting certified weed-free straw on the Iditarod Trail

Mark Nordman, Iditarod Race Director, Race Marshall and Laurie Thorpe, Bureau of Land Management

How did Iditarod dog sled mushing Race Director Mark Nordman get started using certified weed-free straw that Bureau of Land Management (BLM) imposed as yet another permit requirement for him to address on BLM-managed land?

Finding certified weed-free product in Alaska is not a given nor consistent. When certified straw is not available in the Last Frontier, the trade-offs of importing NAWMA-certified straw from the Lower 48 are risky, and the logistics are awkward at best. Hear lessons learned from the Iditarod Race Director and a BLM representative who have struggled to overcome the barriers of meeting the permit requirement for certified weed-free straw with the internationally acclaimed Iditarod dog sled mushing race. Help us identify and navigate the trail ahead to securing a reliable source and supply of Alaska Grown certified weed-free straw for the health of our remote ecosystems, pride of the Iditarod race, and wagging tails.

Weedfree Straw on the Iditarod Trail



Mark Nordman - Iditarod
Laurie Thorpe - BLM



➤ **Regulations**

➤ **Sourcing**

➤ **Quality**

➤ **Cost**

➤ **Operations**

Regulations

- 1999 EO 11312
 - 2002 BLM Permit Requirement NAWMA
 - 2010 BLM Alaska Policy NAWMA +
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- BLM Manages 4 facilities
& 50+ of the Iditarod Race Trail miles
 - EDRR and Outreach
 - Funding to UAA/UAF

Where can we get it?

- Alaska or Washington
- Certification of fields – Delta Junction, AK
- Baling study with UAF CES - NLCS \$
- Copper River Basin Potential ?



Scott Schultz





This years certified straw – 2017 Iditarod

Cost ?

\$11.00



Quality

Foxtail Barley – *Hordeum jubatum*

Foxtail Barley can kill dogs





Pre-Race

















Welcome To
Koyukuk Station
Veterans' Airport







Iditarod Trail
Checkpoint
SLOW DOWN

IDITAROD TRAIL
CHECKPOINT
SLOW DOWN



ROHN ROADHOUSE



Rohn Roadhouse













































Logistical Challenges

- What if we can't burn?
- Tarping – for how long?
- Several checkpoints are on the rivers – vectors for spread
- Alternatives to straw?
- Culture and Tradition vs. Regulation
- Will regulations prohibit use of federal land for Iditarod?
- Incentives for growers - USDA Grants?



Thank you, Woof!

