

FAIRBANKS TO WHITEHORSE (even numbered years)

The distances given are based on the 2009 trail; along some of the river trails, distances may vary slightly from year to year.

Fairbanks to Angel Creek checkpoint; (approx 72 miles)

From the start line you will be traveling thru downtown Fairbanks and parts of Fort Wainwright on the Chena River. The river is well-traveled and there be more than one trail choice. Stay on the Chena. Houses will change to cabins and become sparse. You pass under the Nordale Road Bridge 17 miles out. 5 1/2 miles further you will leave the Chena R. on the left-hand side. The trail takes you around some fields and on to a well-used trail that runs predominately east. This is the Baseline Trail. You will have several road-crossings, (more like well-used driveways), along this trail. Approximately 10 - 15 miles along this you will begin to encounter more housing, and occasional dog yards—you are entering the Pleasant Valley area. A left turn 15 miles along the baseline will put you on the Pleasant Valley Rd. You will run this road to the Chena Hotsprings Road, turn right and parallel that road past Pleasant Valley Store, (did you forget anything?), a Laundromat and several other businesses. The store is just about 40 miles from the start line. You will be on a well-traveled trail for the next 35 miles. Three miles past the store you will cross the Chena Hotspring's Road. Expect overflow at creek crossings. You cross under the Hotsprings road 24 miles out, then again 28 miles out. 2 miles past Angel Creek Lodge is the Mile 52 Chena Hotsprings Rd. checkpoint.

Mile 52 Chena Hot Springs Road to Mile 101; (approx. 41 miles)

You are in an area with recreational cabins and numerous driveways for about 3 miles before turning more northerly up the N. Fork of the Chena River. Expect more overflow as you climb gradually up the trail that parallels the N.F. 17 miles out of the checkpoint you climb steeply up to Boulder Summit. Rosebud Ridge is usually rocky, you are on top, (above timber), for about 3 or 4 miles as you traverse Boulder then Rosebud Summits. Boulder Summit is well-named, Rosebud is not. Expect wind, poor visibility and fair braking conditions. A gradually 5 mile descent thru the trees lands you in the Birch Cr. drainage. The trail follows along the side of Birch Cr. crossing several small drainages—again---expect overflow. The trail gradually improves as you approach the 101 checkpoint. 7 miles from 101 you will come up to the side of the Steese Highway and parallel that road into the checkpoint. You are in a mining district so expect tailing piles, gravel and some glare ice. Come prepared for windy conditions here. Snow cover may be minimal. You are 112 miles from town.

101 to Central; (approx. 28 miles)

Leaving 101 you will be traveling thru an active mining area; lots of gravel and glare ice for the first 3-4 mile. It's 6 miles to Eagle Summit; the last few miles will be windblown tundra, not overly steep from this side. There are numerous tripods in place to lead you up and over the ridge. You will be on top for less than ¼ mile before you begin a very steep descent, snow will be windblown with poor braking on this drop, A few hundred yards from the top on your descent will be a dogleg to the right. Don't miss this! Contour over a few hundred yards, slightly climbing to a bump on the ridgeline, from there the trail heads straight down to tree line. Expect lousy braking and rutted conditions. You will survive; usually the little worse for wear. The trail continues to wind down into Mammoth Creek crossing several overflow drainages; you will cross the Steese Highway 14 miles from 101. After a few miles on usually wet Crooked Creek you'll once again wind through more mining roads and trails. 2 miles from Central you come up on the Steese and run along the road for a short distance, dive off the left-side to avoid a blind corner, than back on the road into the Central Checkpoint. Good facilities and parking. You are 140 miles out.

Central to Circle City; (approx 75 miles)

Leaving Central you will follow the Circle Hotsprings Road for 8 miles. From the Hotsprings airstrip it's 11

miles across Medicine Lake and thru the swamps to Birch Cr. (Expect temperatures on Birch Cr. to be 15 degrees colder than Central). 30 miles on Birch Cr. you pass under the Steese Highway Bridge. It's roughly 17 miles on Birch Cr. from the bridge to the exit on the north bank; 7 more miles to the Circle checkpoint. ¼ mile from the checkpoint you will come up on the road----follow it to the checkpoint. Parking is fair; facilities are good. It's almost always cold here. You are 213 miles from the start.

Circle City to Eagle, Alaska; (approx. 162 miles)

The trail leaves the Checkpoint and drops onto the Yukon. Conditions along the river vary considerably from one year to the next. The trail will cross the river several times; you will possibly be off of the Yukon for short stretches, depending on ice conditions. Brian's Cabin is at 21 mile, south bank at the mouth of a slough. (Very rough emergency stop only). Smith's Cabin is 43 miles out of Circle, on the left bank of the Yukon. There is firewood and good parking, but it can be a hard place to heat due to its size. 17 miles beyond Smith's is Slaven's Roadhouse, excellent facilities for mushers; parking for dogs is only fair. You can pass this stop by staying on the river trail, the bypass trail rejoins in approx ¼ miles. It is 23 miles from Slaven's to the mouth of the Kandik and its' cabin, which is small and easy to heat with room for 2-3 teams. You are a long 80 out of Circle, another 80 to Eagle.

Near Washington Creek, mile 90 is another usually windblown and icy section of trail. Glen Creek Cabin at mile 97 on your right is usually hard to access because of a steep cutbank . 20 miles further is Trout Creek, Mike Sager's Cabin. This is good stop with sheltered parking, though more than 6 teams it is crowded. Trout Cr. is off of the main trail—there is a sign and the trail is a short loop thru. It is 43 miles to Eagle.

About 10 miles from Trout Creek you'll pass Nate and Ruby's place on your left. From here there are a few portage possibilities. We usually take only one; that from the mouth of the 70-mile River skirting behind Calico Bluffs. Departing this portage you pass through Andy Bassich homestead, you are 12 miles from town. As you approach Eagle, you will either see the town or the lights a couple miles out. The Eagle checkpoint has good parking for dogs and excellent facilities for mushers. You are 382 miles from Fairbanks and 152 miles from Dawson City, Yukon.

Eagle to Dawson City; (approx. 150 miles)

Leaving Eagle you will be on the Taylor Highway for a short 50 miles---there are mile posts; Eagle is Milepost 162. You have some potentially nasty glaciers along the road for the first 10 miles.

About 17 miles of gradual climbing from Eagle will take you up on American Summit. Expect alpine conditions from hard drifted snow to soft team swallowing drifts along with wind, some gravel, sidehill conditions and poor visibility. You will be above timber for about 4 miles. Mile 138 will have you back in the trees, under cover. Winding road, ups and downs until you reach the 40-Mile Bridge, MP 112.

Immediately after crossing the bridge you drop down onto the 40-Mile River. Expect it to be cold. Sometimes it overflow, but a normally fast trail for the next 45 miles. Approximately halfway down the 40-mile to its confluence with the Yukon, you will cross into Canada. The 40-Mile is in a deep canyon for most of the way; expect little sun. Clinton Cr. is 41 miles from the Bridge and 4 miles above the confluence of the Yukon and the 40-Mile Rivers. Good hospitality. The old town of 40 Mile also is a great hospitality stop and has excellent cover for dogs. Just out of 40-Mile, you jump on the Yukon for the final 50-odd miles to Dawson.

The trail crosses back and forth along the Yukon depending on ice conditions. There may be some short portages. The 15-Mile River (recognizable because there is almost always overflow at the mouth) is about 20 miles from Dawson. The checkpoint at Dawson is in the middle of town. After checking in, you will be directed to the dog holding area which is about a half-mile away back across the river. You are about 550 miles from Fairbanks and about 450 miles from the finish line.